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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



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does"

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HAND SAPOLIO removes dead cuticle and gives the skin a velvet quality. In the bath it is a marvelous exhilarator, making every nerve and muscle and vein respond.

HAND SAPOLIO

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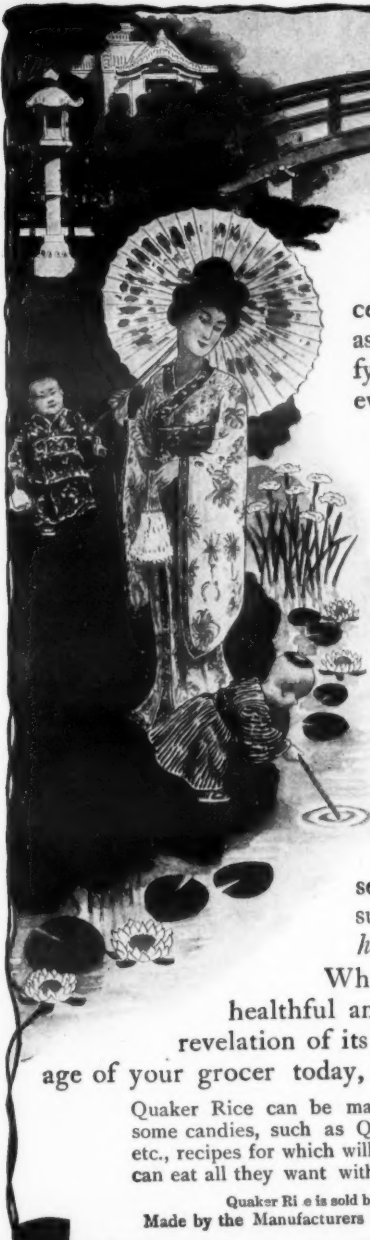
LOWNEY'S

CHOCOLATE BON-BONS

are the most delicious and the most perfect of confections. In their making nothing is used but the choicest chocolate, pure cane sugar, finest nuts and fruits and purest extracts of fruits and flowers.

Lowney's candies can be eaten freely—they are pure and wholesome.

THE WALTER M. LOWNEY COMPANY, BOSTON, MASS.

An illustration of a woman in a traditional Japanese kimono holding a large, open parasol. She stands in a garden-like setting with a bridge in the background and a pagoda visible on the left. A small child is also visible near the woman. The scene is framed by a decorative border.

Just think of a rice cereal as dainty and light as a snowflake, as wholesome and satisfying as meat, and yet so tempting that every child and every grown-up wants *more* when once they have tasted it.

Quaker Rice

(Puffed)

is that cereal. Made from the choicest white rice, by a patented "puffing" process that expands each grain or kernel many times in size, it has a dainty flavor, distinctively its own.

The same process that puffs the rice, also cooks it thoroughly. Quaker Rice is instantly ready to serve, with milk or cream and a dash of sugar, *after warming for a minute in a hot oven.*

While rice has a world-wide fame as a healthful and wholesome food, Quaker Rice is a revelation of its dainty deliciousness. Order a package of your grocer today, and learn how truly delightful it is.

Quaker Rice can be made into the most delicious and wholesome candies, such as Quaker Rice Balls, Quaker Rice Brittle, etc., recipes for which will be found on each package. Children can eat all they want without the slightest fear of consequences.

Quaker Rice is sold by grocers everywhere at 10c the package.
Made by the Manufacturers of Quaker Oats. Address, Chicago, U. S. A.

C/B

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SPIRITE

CORSETS

FOR THE
WOMAN
OF
FASHION



NEWEST CREATIONS FROM PARIS

A Few Words About Smith's

THE MAGAZINE OF TEN MILLION

SMITH'S is the biggest illustrated magazine published. More than this, it makes a stronger appeal to more people than any other magazine. We will tell you why.

In the first place, Mrs. Mary J. Holmes, Mrs. Georgie Sheldon and Charles Garvice write *exclusively* for SMITH'S MAGAZINE. Ten million copies of their books have been sold in America, and their new stories can be found only in SMITH'S MAGAZINE.

That of itself would be enough to back up what we say in regard to SMITH'S. But there are other things about the magazine that give it a broader, bigger field than any other. For instance:

It has a wider variety of contents than any publication issued hitherto. It contains a series of eighteen or more art studies of famous and beautiful actresses in every number. They are printed in a new two-color process on specially calendered paper. There are articles on public topics and questions of the day written by people who know what they are talking about. There are articles on scientific subjects of popular interest. There is a well conducted, well illustrated fashion department. There are articles written specially for women on the subjects that are the most vital to them. In each issue there is an article on the stage by Channing Pollock, the dramatist. There are special articles on subjects of real, up-to-date importance.

Size in material bulk alone does not make a big magazine. It must be comprehensive in its contents to be really big. We can claim that for SMITH'S.

In it are the best short stories obtainable anywhere. Each story we print has exceptional merit, for, in spite of the size of the magazine, we use no "fillers." Such authors as William Hamilton Osborne, Inez Haynes Gilmore, Annie Hamilton Donnell, George Bronson-Howard and Maravene Kennedy contribute to this department of the magazine. It contains real live jokes and witticisms, poems by Wallace Irwin and articles by Charles Battell Loomis.

SMITH'S has in it something to suit every taste, and everything in it is the best of its kind.



HOW WOULD YOU LIKE
TO BE IN HIS PLACE?



Easier Position—Better Pay

I have something of vital interest to say to every young man and woman who desires to earn from \$25 to \$100 a week.

I have something to say to every clerk, book-keeper and underpaid subordinate who sees only continued slavery ahead, and little or no increased financial prospects.

I want them to investigate the very rapidly expanding field of advertising, and realize that the demand for trained ad writers to-day is *more than three times* what it was last year or any other year.

The experience of Mr. Smith, whose portrait and success are given herewith, is a mere duplicate of daily occurrences, for the widespread demand for Powell graduates is breaking all records.

It will interest the ambitious to know that this demand, due to the enormous increase of business generally, now comes from the very largest advertisers and agents, and the tendency is to offer higher and higher salaries. Mr. L. A. Munger, Ozon Park, N. Y., has just become advertising manager of the syndicate of shoe stores operated by Frazin & Oppenheim, New York, at *double the salary* they told me they were willing to pay. A typical case, too.

The National Herb Co., Washington, D. C., wrote me yesterday to secure a Powell graduate, who could manage both advertising and factory. One of the largest Pittsburgh advertising agents advertised last week in the *Gazette* for a Powell graduate and got him without writing me. Pretty eloquent testimony to my standing.

Practically every advertising journal in America refers to me when subscribers ask for private information as to which correspondence course of advertising is best. There are two reasons for this action—I am recognized as the leading expert,

When writing to advertisers please mention Ainslee's

Mr. and Mrs. A. EUGENE SMITH

Mr. and Mrs. Smith both enrolled as Powell students early in September, 1905, from Wilmington, N. C., where they then resided. About the first of the New Year Mr. Smith intimated that he would like to give up traveling on the road, and his preference being a western city I secured him a position as advertising manager of Swaine's Sanitarium, Cleveland, O., and his last letter shows how thoroughly the Powell System and a good man are appreciated. Mr. Smith's success, coupled with Mrs. Smith's ability to earn a good income on her own account, will result in a pretty large partnership income.

No less than four others, friends of Mr and Mrs. Smith, have taken the Powell System, and enthusiastically endorse it.

Cleveland, O., Jan. 24th, 1906.

My dear Mr. Powell:

Your letter to this company and myself is before me, and I thank you very much for your kind wishes. I anticipate no trouble in making good. I was informed night before last that in connection with my other work, I should become general manager and have full charge of the office and financial end of this institution. This is rather a larger bite than I expected; however, you know me, and I will endeavor to deliver the goods untarnished.

Under separate cover I mail you my photograph. Believe me as ever
Your friend,
A. EUGENE SMITH.

and I have had more success in qualifying brainy people than all other schools combined. More than that, I am the only teacher confining himself exclusively to advertising instruction.

If you want to learn all about the increasing demand and the Powell system, I will mail you free my elegant Prospectus and "Net Results" on request.

The most interesting works ever published, either for those who want to double their salaries or for business men desiring to double their profits.

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EERS**

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**THE
PRIVAT-
EERS**

tells how one of these gentlemen, to wreck the other's hopes, kidnaps and carries off on a yacht one of the most delightful English girls known to recent fiction.

**THE
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EERS**

holds excitement in every line and chapter up to the end. And no one can tell such a story better than MR. MARRIOTT-WATSON. He is a master of his art.

**THE
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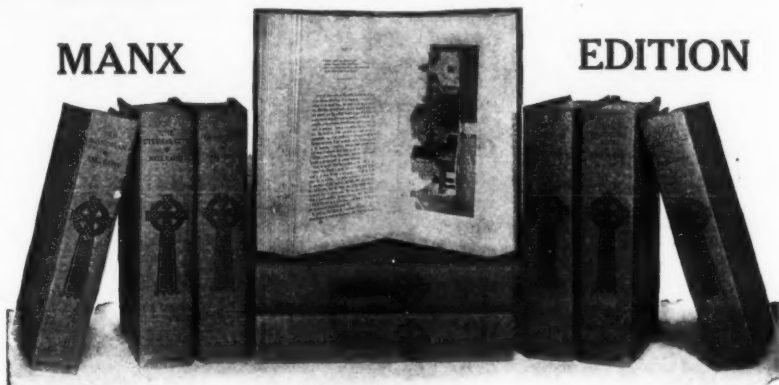
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Ainslee's 1906

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"Here's Your Hat!"

Cartoon by Oppen



(Copyrighted, 1929, American Journal-Examiner)

The above is a humorous interpretation of a tremendously serious fact. With several members summarily asked to resign, five more under indictment, and one dead in state's prison, an abrupt crisis has been reached in the Senate. The situation has been admirably summed up by David Graham Phillips, as follows:

"The Treason of the Senate! Treason is a strong word, but not too strong, rather too weak, to characterize the situation in which the Senate is the eager, resourceful, indefatigable agent of interests as hostile to the American people as any invading army could be—interests that manipulate the prosperity produced by all, so that it heaps up riches for the few—interests whose growth and power can only mean the degradation of the people, of the educated into sycophants, of the masses toward serfdom.

"The Senators, are not elected by the people—they are elected by the 'interests'; except in extreme and rare and negligible instances, the people can neither elect or dismiss them."

It is the duty of every intelligent American to get a sane, sound understanding of these appalling facts. To learn the truth, read Mr. Phillips'

"THE TREASON OF THE SENATE"

—the most scathing, truthful exposure of political corruption in years. Now appearing in the April

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will save you much of this lost business energy. They will stop up the selling leaks, open up new markets for your goods and find you buyers whom you would never hear about in any other way. They will place before you every scrap of information printed in this country pertaining to your line of business and give it to you from day to day while it is fresh and valuable and before your competitors have even heard of it.

The International Press Clipping Bureau,
the largest press clipping bureau in the world, will send you everything printed in every newspaper, magazine or trade journal in the country, on any subject you may select.

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M. ANNIE POAGE
advertising manager for the Daily Independent, Ashland, Ky., was reporter on a newspaper before she prepared for advertisement writing with the Page-Davis Company.



J. W. IRWIN
advertising manager for C. J. Hepple & Son, piano manufacturers of Philadelphia, was filling an ordinary stenographic position when he became our student.

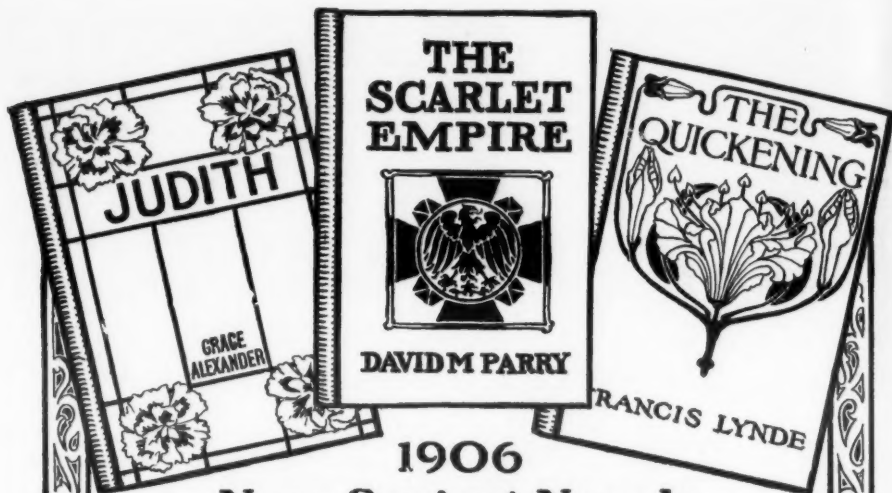
The question with every man whether he owns a business or is employed at a salary is "HOW CAN I INCREASE MY INCOME." If he possesses common-sense and has a common-school education, the question can quickly be solved, providing he will look into the matter intelligently. The excuses men make for themselves constitute their greatest obstacle to success. It doesn't cost anything for you to find out THE VALUE TO YOU OF A PAGE-DAVIS ADVERTISING COURSE; to find out why hundreds of men and women who were working for as small an amount as \$12.00 a week are to-day, after COMPLETING A CORRESPONDENCE COURSE WITH THE "ORIGINAL SCHOOL," MAKING \$2,000 AND \$3,000 A YEAR. If you will stop for a moment's thought, you will see that there must be a reason for such rapid advancement. If you could be in my office for one week, and read the ENTHUSIASTIC LETTERS FROM SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS, you would then wonder how it is possible that other men and women postpone the study of advertising. You could read letters from clerks, stenographers, bookkeepers, and men in every known vocation who are stepping OUT OF THEIR NARROW CONFINES INTO \$25.00 TO \$100.00 A WEEK POSITIONS AFTER HAVING LEARNED ADVERTISING. Not in one case alone, not in a hundred cases but in thousands of instances. You would also realize the need for men and women trained to write advertisements, because there is a continual and ever-growing demand for efficient advertisement-writers. ADVERTISEMENT WRITING IS THE MOST FASCINATING BUSINESS IN THE WORLD AND THE MOST PROFITABLE ONE AS WELL. Send in your name and we shall be glad to demonstrate to you how thousands of men and women have increased their incomes from 25 per cent. to 100 per cent., and we will also tell you what we can do for you. It is a straight-forward business proposition where there is nothing to lose and everything to gain. Fill in the coupon, and mail to-day. You will receive by return post, our large, beautiful new prospectus, which lays the whole field before you, so plainly and practically, that you can see opportunities for yourself.

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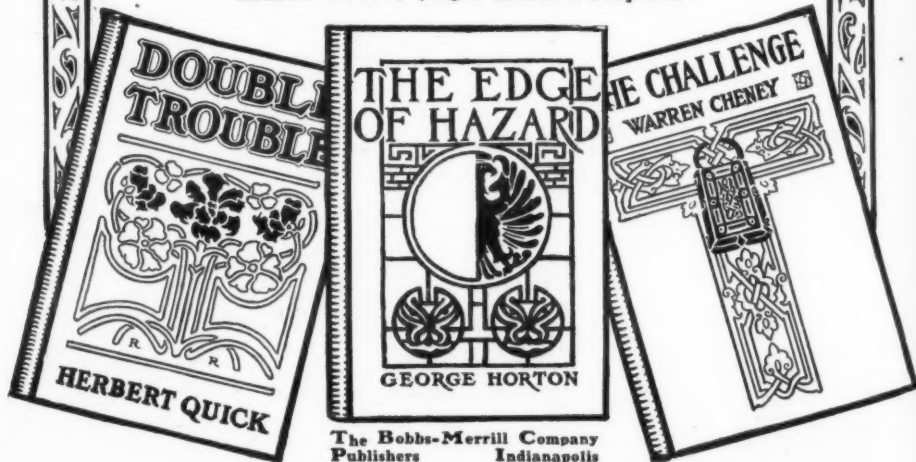
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AINSLIE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

VOL. XVII

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AINSLEE'S

VOL. XVII.

APRIL, 1906.

No. 3.

CAPRICIOUS CAROLINE



CHAPTER I.



As the large motor-car swung along with the easy velocity and assurance of some enormous bird, Camilla Lancing nestled more cozily into the warmth of her fur wraps.

Rupert Haverford was driving, and he looked back every now and then to see if she was comfortable.

"Is this too quick for you?" he asked once.

Mrs. Lancing only shook her head with a smile. "It is too delightful," she answered.

The smooth, swinging movement of the car fascinated her. As she now and then closed her eyes, she felt as if she were being carried away from all that constituted life to her at other times; from excitement and pleasure and anxiety, from sordid and obtrusive care; even from the fever of hope and the illusive charm of chance. It was a delightful sensation.

The speed of the car lessened as the road began to wind upward; a thin mist began to gather ahead of them. Haverford pulled up and, relinquishing his place to the chauffeur, climbed into the body of the car.

"Are you very cold?" he asked anx-

iously. "Do you know, I am very much afraid, Mrs. Lancing, that this road will put us back an hour or so. It was foolish of me to come this way, for the country is new to me, and the road is certainly about the worst we have struck lately."

Camilla Lancing only laughed, however, as she was tossed up and down occasionally by the elastic movement of the springs.

"It is a matter of perfect indifference to me what time we arrive home," she said. "That is the effect motoring has on me. It engenders a heavenly sensation of irresponsibility. I simply don't care a pin what happens. My one conscious desire is to go on and on and on."

Rupert Haverford sat down in the other seat and looked at her with the sincerest pleasure; she was so delightful to look at. The note of her garb was a rich brown; she had on a long coat of some rough fur, but round her throat and shoulders she wore a stole of the softest sables; there was a small cap of sables on her brown hair, and she had tied the brown gauze veil she wore in a cunning bow under her chin.

"But of course this sounds horribly selfish. So like me. Shall we be very late? I am so sorry if you are sorry; otherwise I don't think it matters. Agnes said she would expect us when she saw us. Fortunately"—Mrs. Lan-

cing laughed—"dinner is a movable feast at Yelverton."

Haverford answered this very frankly:

"I am afraid I am not troubling in the very least about Mrs. Brenton or her dinner; I am thinking entirely of you. This is the first time you have entrusted yourself to my care, you know, and I want everything to go smoothly."

"Now, please don't worry about me," she said. "I am absolutely comfortable. Naturally," she added with a laugh, "I know that if I had done my duty I should have insisted on driving back with Agnes, though she declared she did not want me; but it is so nice *not* to do one's duty now and then."

They drove on in silence for awhile; then the car pulled up here again, and the chauffeur got down and lit the powerful lamps. By now they had passed completely into the embrace of a white fog; the air was raw, and the damp cold very penetrating.

"Perhaps you would have preferred to have me go back with the others," Mrs. Lancing murmured softly, as they moved onward again.

Haverford just looked into her eyes, that even through the mist and her veil shone brilliantly.

"You know perfectly well I was not likely to do that," he answered bluntly, and yet there was a kind of restraint in his voice. Mrs. Lancing caught that restraint, and with a sudden impatient contraction of her brows moved almost imperceptibly nearer to him; she arranged her veil with her small, white-gloved hand, and then left it lying for an instant on the outside of the rug. It was very close to his; but Rupert Haverford did not touch the hand, nor unfold it, as he might so easily have done, protectingly in his large, brown, strong one.

Mrs. Lancing bit her lip. It was not the first time that this man had unconsciously repulsed her; there were times when, in her irritation, she called him a prig. But she misjudged him; Rupert Haverford was not a prig; he was only a very straightforward, practical, in a

sense simple-minded man, who, like an explorer, was advancing step by step into an unknown world, meeting and mingling every day with elements that were not only new to him, but that belonged to a range of things about which he had never had occasion to think hitherto. Camilla herself was prominent among these new sensations; she at once was a bewilderment and a fascination.

Mrs. Lancing, of course, knew briefly the outlines of the story of this working man and his sudden and unexpected accession to wealth, and recognized clearly enough that Haverford was as far removed in thought and social education from the various men who flattered in and out of her life as the sun is from the earth; but she had little discrimination.

She liked men very much; she had many men friends, and few women friends, although the spontaneous, effervescing sympathy which was, perhaps, her most marked characteristic made her very attractive to women, and accounted for her wide popularity; there was something so disarming, so delightful, about Camilla Lancing. Beauty alone would never have given her a quarter the power she possessed; it was her ready interest—absolutely genuine for the moment—her quickness in associating herself with those things that were paramount with the persons who approached her, that made her irresistible.

But she was not patient, and the more she saw of Rupert Haverford, the more necessary he became to her, the less patience she had.

He puzzled her; he piqued her; he annoyed her; he made her nervous.

What were his feelings toward herself?

"He is so horribly slow," she mused fretfully. "He ponders every word he says. I suppose he is terribly afraid of making a mistake. I am sure his money oppresses him. He must have been ever so much nicer when he was working as a foreman, or drayman, or whatever he was before all this money came to him."

All at once the machine grated

sharply; they shook in their seats, and Mrs. Lancing gave a little exclamation of alarm; then the car stood still, and the chauffeur got out hastily.

"We're done for now," he said; and Rupert Haverford swallowed a word or two.

If it had not been for Mrs. Lancing he would not have cared two pins. Time was of no importance to him, but this accident was most inopportune and annoying under the circumstances.

Fortunately, the cold, thick mist seemed to part a little at this moment. With a reassuring word to his guest, Mr. Haverford got out and joined the chauffeur in his investigations.

"Something has gone wrong with the works," he said to his guest, after a short conference with the chauffeur; "we can't see what it is exactly in this gloom. I wonder if you would mind sitting here a little while, while I go and find out where we are?"

Mrs. Lancing shook aside the rug.

"Do let me come with you?" she pleaded. "Really, I would much rather go. A walk will warm me up, and I shall feel so lonely without you. I believe I am frightened. May I come?"

Her pretty helplessness touched him, of course. And as he helped her to alight, Rupert Haverford felt his heart stir a little. So he supposed other men felt when they ministered to a wife or some one who had a tender claim on them.

They set off at a brisk pace down the hill.

"I have not the least idea where we are, but there must be a station somewhere near, I suppose," he said; "and if we can only borrow a trap, perhaps we shall be able to get back to Yelverton in time for dinner, after all. It must be somewhere about half-past four now."

They came after awhile upon a kind of village, in which the lights of the one shop—a post-office and general stores combined—shone hospitably.

The keeper of the stores, a portly, good-natured man, could suggest no better help for the motor than to borrow a couple of horses from the nearest

farm and tow the car away from the road. He amiably consented to lend his trap to drive Mrs. Lancing to the nearest station, distant about three miles, and when this was arranged Mrs. Lancing remained at the stores, where a cup of tea was forthcoming, while Haverford went back into the mist to set matters right with his chauffeur.

This done, he lifted Camilla Lancing into the tall cart that was used to dispense the goods from the stores, and they started for the station.

Most women would have been tired and cross and difficult. Mrs. Lancing, however, made the best of everything. Even when the station was reached, and they found they would have some time to wait, and then must change trains before reaching the nearest point to Yelverton, Camilla accepted the discomfort philosophically.

"I know you are dying to smoke. Leave me here; this is quite a cozy place; perhaps I will go to sleep," she said, as she passed into the waiting-room.

He obeyed her reluctantly.

She looked so pretty, so pathetic, with the pallor of fatigue robbing her cheeks of their usual delicate bloom. He stood looking at her with a kind of frown on his face for a moment, but he said nothing; and to get rid of him she closed her eyes and leaned her head against the hard wooden wall.

Her lips trembled as he went out and closed the door.

On the morrow her visit to Yelverton would end, and she must go back to town—back to the practically impossible task of clearing her daily path of one or two hideous obstacles.

There were some things awaiting that had to be met that sent a shiver of dread through her now as she recalled them. She opened her eyes after a time, and sat watching Haverford's tall, long-coated figure pass the window of the waiting-room every now and then.

"And with a scratch of a pen," she said to herself wearily, "he could put all my difficulties straight. Why *does* he not speak? Sometimes I feel he cares for me more than I have ever been

cared for before; then the next moment he chills me; he almost frightens me."

Camilla repressed her tears with difficulty. She was so truly sorry for herself. Other women—so she pondered—had such ease in their lives; she knew of no other woman who was so lonely as herself, so burdened, so troubled.

Rupert Haverford paused by the window about this time. He watched her awhile as she sat thinking so intently, then flung away his cigar and opened the door.

"The train is just due," he said, "and the sea fog is creeping its way here. I shall be very glad to get you away, Mrs. Lancing; I am sure you must be thoroughly tired out."

They drifted into a silence till the train came, and spoke very little during the journey to the junction, where they were to alight and pick up the London train.

When the London train steamed in there was only one first-class compartment; and as Haverford opened the door for Mrs. Lancing to enter, the only occupant, a young man, glanced up casually.

Camilla Lancing drew back imperceptibly for an instant as she caught sight of him, but if she had intended to retreat, this intention was frustrated, for the young man flung aside his newspaper and started to his feet.

"Hallo, there!" he exclaimed. "Hallo! Hallo! *Hallo!* Here's luck! Who'd have thought of meeting you, Mrs. Lancing? I'm just home from Yankeeland, and am toddling down to Yelverton for the night. Any chance of your being there?"

Mrs. Lancing laughingly explained the situation, and introduced the two men.

Sir Samuel Broxbourne looked keenly at Haverford.

"So that's the factory Johnny who came into all that tin the other day, is it?" Broxbourne thought. "Stuck up sort of chap! Might be a parson, or an actor."

Rupert Haverford subsided into a corner and let the other two talk. He was seeing Camilla now in another

phase, and one that was not charming to him.

Instead of resenting Broxbourne's rough, slangy jargon, she seemed to enjoy it. Having disposed of that first moment of awkwardness, even of alarm, which the unexpected meeting with Broxbourne signified to her, she responded instantly to the excitement of the moment.

When they left the train, however, and Broxbourne had gone on ahead, she slipped her hand confidently for a moment in Mr. Haverford's arm.

"He is such a bore, isn't he?" she whispered. "I wonder why Agnes asked him? She said nothing to me about his coming. I have known him all my life—we are sort of cousins," she added; and then she laughed. "Well, after all, it is lucky Sir Samuel is here, for, do you know, we quite forgot to wire for a carriage? I only hope they have sent a big brougham."

"I am going to walk," Haverford said at once; but this she vetoed. In fact, she had no desire to drive tête-à-tête with the other man.

"Oh, *please* don't," she said. "I beg you will not leave me. And you must not forget I am in your charge to-day."

And Haverford had to yield to this argument as a matter of course.

The drive was not a pleasant one, however. They were rather crowded in the brougham.

As soon as they passed into the big hall at Yelverton, Haverford left Mrs. Lancing and Sir Samuel chatting with the others and went to his room.

He suddenly felt nervous and bad-tempered, and he wanted to be alone.

When his servant came hurrying in, after awhile, Haverford was staring into the fire with a rather grim look on his face.

"Have everything packed early to-morrow, Harper," he said; "I shall go to town by the first available train in the morning."

Then he roused himself and took up the letters lying on the table. The first he opened was written on shabby paper in handwriting that was small and curiously formed.

It was dated the day before, and had been forwarded from town.

DEAR SIR: If you please, will you come and see your mother as soon as you return from the country? There was a little accident yesterday when she was out driving, and she was much alarmed. I am glad to say she was not hurt, but her doctor has ordered her to keep very quiet for a day or two. Yours faithfully,

CAROLINE GRANIGER.

P. S.—I have asked that this letter shall be forwarded to you.

CHAPTER II.

When Mrs. Lancing went up-stairs her hostess went with her.

"So the dear motor did go wrong, after all," observed Mrs. Brenton, a trifle triumphantly. "I think I had the best of it in my despised one-horse shay."

She was a plain woman, with a hard-riding figure and gray hair neatly plaited, but she had a pair of handsome and kind eyes and a delightful voice.

She helped Camilla to slip out of the big coat.

"Fortunately, you were well wrapped up," she said. "But *what* a weight this coat is, Camilla! How can you walk in it at all? When did you get it? I have not seen it before."

"Oh, haven't you?" queried Mrs. Lancing, in a tone of very real astonishment. "Why, I have had it *ages*; got it at a Veronique sale. It was absurdly cheap."

She told these various untruths quite glibly, and then made haste to get away from the subject.

"I am rather anxious, Agnes," she said. "I have had no letter from nurse to-day."

"Everything is all right," Mrs. Brenton announced cheerily. "I've just telephoned. The children are gone to bed. They have been very good, and are quite well."

"I miss them dreadfully," said Camilla; and her voice broke a little. Turning, she picked up two photographs that were on the dressing-table and kissed them passionately.

"Miss them!" said Mrs. Brenton, in

her brisk way. "I should think you did! Dear little souls, I can't think why on earth you didn't bring them with you; there is heaps of room, and children are never a bother to me, as you know. Well, now I'll trot away again. I expect you feel thoroughly tired out, Camilla. Dinner will be half-an-hour late, so you can take it easy. Why don't you have forty winks? That is a heavenly chair for a snooze."

Mrs. Lancing was already crouched up in the luxurious depths of the chintz-covered chair. She yawned as she cuddled into the cushions.

"Fancy Sammy Broxbourne turning up so suddenly. Why didn't you tell me he was coming, Agnes?" she asked, a little jerkily.

"Because I did not know it myself. He wired this morning to ask if he could run down for a day or two, and as I was not here Dick answered for me, saying, of course, he could come. I can't say that I think he is much improved, and he has put on a lot of flesh. By the way, how did he and Rupert Haverford get on?" inquired Mrs. Brenton, a little abruptly.

Camilla Lancing shrugged her shoulders.

"A very clear case of hatred at first sight! The moral Haverford sat in a corner and scowled in silence, and, of course, Sammy used all the swear words he knows, just on purpose to make things pleasant."

Mrs. Brenton compressed her lips; there was definite disappointment in her eyes.

She stood a moment as if she had something more she would have liked to say; then, with an imperceptible shrug of her shoulders, she turned away, and, with another command to Camilla to rest, went out of the room.

Mrs. Lancing nestled herself more closely into the big chair and shut her eyes.

It was a relief that Agnes Brenton had gone, but she was almost afraid of being left quite alone.

"I never thought he would come back so soon," she said to herself so wearily, so miserably; "he said he would

be away for ages and ages; and I had almost forgotten." She turned her face on the cushions, and bit them, as if a sudden physical pang had shot through her; and so she lay, breathing in a sobbing fashion, for some little time; then she lifted her head and pressed her hands to her brow and to her hot eyes.

"Why doesn't Rupert Haverford speak?" she asked herself in the same fretful way. "I simply can't go on struggling and fighting like this. I was never meant to struggle and fight; and is it my fault that I make mistakes? How *can* I be different? I was brought up to be what I am. When other children were given twopence a week to put into a money-box, I was given a five-pound note to spend on dolls or make into kites. Of course I am extravagant! Of course I get into holes! I should be a living wonder if I didn't."

She pushed the thick hair back from her brows, and, slipping from the chair, bunched herself on the hearth-rug, holding her hands before her face to shield it from the blaze.

"I won't believe he doesn't care," she said to herself, her thoughts reverting to Haverford again. "He *does* care, only he won't speak." She sighed, and shut her eyes for a moment; then her mind worked into an easier groove. "I do believe Sammy was glad to see me!" was her next thought. "He wasn't a bit changed. Perhaps I am worrying myself for nothing!" Her face lightened, the eyes grew eager. As was inevitable with her, despair began to give way slowly but surely before the invulnerable optimism of her nature. She pinned up her hair, and sat gazing into the fire, humming to herself softly while her mind pieced together a dozen different possibilities, and carried her gradually but surely away from doubt and definite fear.

Mrs. Lancing was one of the last down that evening—in fact, she kept the rest of the party waiting for dinner; but when she did come, she was so charming and so apologetic, and looked so fascinating, that every one forgave her.

Sir Samuel Broxbourne took her in

to dinner, and she sat where she could not see Haverford.

She could hear a little of the conversation, however, that passed at the other end of the table, and she changed color when she heard him tell Mrs. Brenton that he was going to town by the first train in the morning.

She translated this to mean a sudden retreat on his part. For there had been a half arrangement that he should take her back to London in his motor, and as the chauffeur had promised that the car would be at Yelverton either late that night or very early the next morning, there was no reason why this engagement should be broken. She ate the rest of her dinner in a subdued manner, and as she followed the other women out of the room she paused a moment by Haverford's side.

"So you won't motor back to-morrow?" she said hurriedly. "I am quite disappointed. I was looking forward to it."

His face flushed.

"I am sorry," he answered, "but I must go up quite early; my mother is not well," he explained.

"Oh!" said Camilla; she was at once reassured. "I am *so* sorry. I hope you are not very anxious? But you must tell me about it a little later." And, gathering her clinging draperies in her hand, she smiled up at him and then fluttered through the doorway and vanished.

When the men came from the dining-room there was no opportunity for a little chat between Mrs. Lancing and Haverford, for the card-players seated themselves immediately at the tables.

Mrs. Brenton, who was not a bridge fanatic, beckoned to Rupert Haverford to come and sit with her in her pet corner.

"You will never get *me* in that magnificent car of yours again," she said. "Why don't you have horses?"

"I have a few horses," Haverford answered. "I don't quite know why I took to motoring, except that I have a leaning toward engineering, and the mechanism of the cars interests me, and I like rushing about. I have not yet

got used to my idle life," he said, a little restlessly. "You see, for nearly seventeen years I was accustomed to be out and at work by six o'clock every day."

"But you are not always idle now, are you?" she asked.

Haverford laughed. "I don't think I do an hour's honest work in a week," he said. "However, I am planning a different future; I have certain pet schemes of my own which I have not yet put into working order."

"What sort of schemes?" asked Mrs. Brenton. He did not answer her at once; he was looking at the card-players, at Camilla's dainty figure. She was laughing; he loved to hear her laugh, it was such young laughter.

"Oh!" he said, rousing himself, "they are just some fancies that have come to me. I am going to travel," he added a little abruptly. "I got my first love of wandering when I was a very little lad. My father brought me up on travel books and books of adventure. He had so longed to know other countries and other people, but this was denied him. If he had lived—" He broke off sharply.

"My father was a hero," he continued, after a moment—there was something in his voice that made Mrs. Brenton bite her lip nervously—"he was a doctor—a man who worked all day and sometimes all night in that crowded, tragically poor factory town where I spent so many years of my life. I worshipped my father, Mrs. Brenton; he was an enthusiast, a dreamer, a saint. He died in harness, sacrificed to the poverty and misery of the people, who were his first thought."

Mrs. Brenton looked at him sympathetically. It had become the fashion with most people to call Rupert Haverford hard names, to find him mean, selfish, and ungenerous; Mrs. Brenton had always liked him. She tried to say something in answer to his last speech, but even as the words trembled on her lips Haverford spoke on in his usual quiet way.

"When I do start on my travels I think I shall bequeath the care of my

motors to you, Mrs. Brenton. Though you hate them, I know you are too tender-hearted to ill-treat them."

She laughed, falling in with his change of mood.

"I will take care of them if you will promise to come back. You must come back," she said, "and marry, and go into Parliament, and generally settle down."

"Yes, I suppose I shall marry some day," Haverford answered. He had passed away entirely from that touch of emotion; indeed, his eyes twinkled. "Do you know why I like you, Mrs. Brenton?" he added suddenly.

She shook her head. "I am only too glad that you do like me," she answered, with a smile. "I don't seek to know the cause."

"Well, you appeal to me for many reasons," said Rupert Haverford, "but particularly because you are about the only woman I know who has not insisted on finding me a wife."

Mrs. Brenton smiled, but only faintly.

"I believe I am just as bad at matchmaking as most people," she said; "you must not endow me with unknown qualities."

Then, after a little desultory conversation, Haverford rose and said: "Good night."

"Pray tell Mrs. Lancing that my motor is at her disposal if she cares to use it to-morrow," he said.

"You won't use it yourself?" Mrs. Brenton asked.

"No, it will take me too long to get to town. I must see my mother before going into the city. I shall not say 'Good-by.'" Rupert added, as he held her hand in his, "for you are coming up to town almost directly, are you not? And you have promised to dine with me, you know."

"I am longing to see your house," Agnes Brenton said. "I hear it is full of beautiful things. Camilla has raved to me about it."

"It is beautiful," he agreed, and then he smiled; "you see, I can say that because I have had very little to do with putting it together. I inherited nearly all my treasures."

No one was stirring when Rupert

Haverford descended the stairs the next morning. He breakfasted alone; but just as he was about to get into the brougham and drive away, one of the maids brought him a little note. It was from Camilla, and she wrote:

Thank you so much for wishing me to use your motor, but I don't care to go in it without you. Do let me know how your mother is. I hope with all my heart that you will find her better. Don't forget you have promised to have tea with the children next week. Sincerely your friend, C. L.

He slipped the note into his pocket-book. It was pleasant to have that little remembrance from her.

CHAPTER III.

When he reached his mother's house in Kensington, Rupert Haverford was met with the information that Mrs. Baynhurst had left town the preceding day.

The house was all shut up, and the servant who opened the door to him wore no apron or cap.

He passed into the hall thoroughly vexed.

"I came up from the country on purpose," he said to her, naturally irritated. "I understood from a letter that was sent on from my house that my mother had had an accident, and that she was anything but well."

"No more she is, sir," said the maid. "Doctor Mortlock, he was quite angry when he come here this morning and found Mrs. Baynhurst gone; but there was a letter come yesterday from Mr. Cuthbert, saying as he was ill in Paris, and the mistress she fussed herself into a fever, and wouldn't rest satisfied, so she left last night. She wasn't no more fit to travel than this door-mat, sir. You see, there was all but a smash-up with the brougham."

The maid rambled on loquaciously, and Rupert Haverford quickly gathered that his mother must have had a nasty shock, as her carriage had apparently just escaped collision with a runaway cab. She was not a nervous or a timid woman—far from it; but of late she had been in anything but good

health, and this journey to Paris appeared to Haverford not merely an altogether needless fatigue, but a very foolish undertaking on her part.

In all probability his half-brother's serious illness would signify nothing more than an ordinary cold.

It was so typical of Cuthbert Baynhurst to write in a sensational way about himself; equally typical of their mother to take immediate alarm when any such news reached her.

It relieved Rupert Haverford to be angry with his half-brother now. He had made it a principle never to be angry with his mother; it was so useless. She was a strange creature, was Rupert's mother. In a sense, they were nothing more than acquaintances, for she had left his father when he had been a baby of a few months.

Octavia Marling had married John Haverford in a hurry, and had regretted the haste almost immediately.

Their life together had been unsupportable. Rupert's father had adored his wife, but he could not live with her.

She was a brilliant woman, a woman with the brains, the will, the tenacious strength, of a man; a woman who made rules for herself, and quietly and firmly rebelled against the position which tradition and nature had allotted to her sex.

When she had borne a child she had felt humiliated; motherhood was a natural evil, she admitted so much, but there were women created specially for the purpose, and she was assuredly not one of those women. She put the baby away from her as she put other objectionable things, and fell back on her work with new and deeper intentions.

Perhaps the kindest letter she ever wrote to her husband was the one he received after she had left him. She was so unutterably glad to be free; to put the factory town, with its troops of working-men and women clattering on the rough stones past the window where she worked, far, far behind her.

She saw Rupert only at a few odd times during the years that stretched between his birth and his father's death.

And she was abroad when John Haverford died.

By his father's will the boy was left to the joint care of his mother and of a man called Matthew Woolgar.

No one knew where to find Mrs. Haverford, so the charge of the lad passed into the hands of this Woolgar, who accepted the trust in a very grudging spirit.

He was an ignorant, churlish man who had worked his way up from the gutter to the command of enormous wealth.

John Haverford had written down his wishes as to his boy's education and profession, but Matthew Woolgar sneered these wishes into thin air.

Without waiting to consult Octavia Haverford, he took matters into his own hands, and sent the boy into the factory.

Rupert Haverford wore common clothes as the others did, he ate the same common food, he lived and moved and slept among these people who adored his father, and for whose children his father had lost his life. There was nothing outwardly to tell the difference between Rupert Haverford and any of the others, except when Matthew Woolgar paid one of his surprise visitations—as he was fond of doing—to the works, when he would be certain to single out "t' poor doctor's lad" for some sharp reproof or snarling word.

Then the mother had flashed into existence again.

She wrote from America, announcing that she was married a second time, and peremptorily commanding Rupert to join her.

Matthew Woolgar quietly and grimly refused to permit this.

In truth, Rupert himself had no desire to go. His mother was nothing to him, hardly a name. He had dreams of his own. He would get promotion, earn more, save money, and even yet follow that career which his father had desired for him.

And he got on. Against all odds he advanced.

He was about eighteen, a tall, raw

youth with a thin, resolute face, when his mother and he met.

Mrs. Baynhurst was a widow for the second time. This was apparently not a matter of great sorrow to her, but she was a changed woman.

For a second time also she had become a mother; a second son had been born to her—a little, delicate, neurotic child, whose birth was not, as Rupert's had been, merely a physical and a detestable fact, but whose frail little existence brought to her the knowledge of those things which neither logic nor erudition nor philosophy had ever vouchsafed to her.

With the coming of this second child—the offspring of a brief, a miserable passion—the flood of those natural yearnings which make the sum of most women's lives had broken its barriers at last. Rupert had been an amazement and a humiliation; Cuthbert was a delight, a happiness so illimitable, so wondrous, that the woman trembled even at the realization of it.

The meeting between Rupert and his mother had led to nothing. They were as far apart as the two poles.

And so a few years rolled on, marked only for Rupert by the knowledge that he was slowly but surely moving upward, and sweetened by the fact that he was following those lines which his father had laid down for him as far as he could.

Half his wages went in books and to pay for tuition. His craving for knowledge amounted to greediness. When he was twenty-six Rupert was in a post of authority at the factory; when he was thirty he was master of all that Matthew Woolgar—now dead—had possessed—a fortune so large that no one quite knew its limits; a young man with the world before him, and a certain section of the world at his feet.

It was he, then, who had sought his mother.

His first action—when he had realized that he had the command of so much money—had been to put his mother out of the reach of difficulty.

He bought her the house in which

she now lived, she had her own carriage and a very comfortable income. He gave her, in fact, exactly the sum equivalent to that which he spent on himself.

On arriving in London from Yelverton, Haverford went to the city, where he had an office, and it was late in the afternoon before he reached the house that was perhaps the sole reason why he had elected to make London his headquarters.

Matthew Woolgar had raised up to himself a veritable palace. Money had been lavished on this house like water. The art experts of the various great Continental centers had been busy for months and months finding treasures with which to garnish this lordly dwelling-place.

Still, though the world had of late fluttered in and out of these rooms very often, this wonderful house remained only a house; it was never a home. That element of solitude, that deadness, as it were, that clings about the atmosphere of museums and other treasure storehouses, continued to oppress Rupert.

And to-day, coming freshly from the cheery, sociable influence of Yelverton, Rupert was sensibly affected by this sense of solitude, this mockery of empty grandeur.

With one of those curious tricks that imagination plays us at times, he was suddenly wafted from the cozy warmth of his room to that cold, damp mist of the day before. He was walking through the white fog with Camilla Lancing nestling close to him.

He caught his breath suddenly, like one who fights for a cold, keen wind, and got up. It had grown to be the dominant influence of his present life, this struggle with himself on the subject of Camilla Lancing. How would it end?

His man came into his room at that moment, bringing a note.

It was written in pencil, and came from Camilla. She had scribbled:

I am waiting outside. I wonder if you would see me? I want to see you *very*

much. I have a great favor to ask you. Could you spare me ten minutes?

Rupert Haverford read the note two or three times; he wanted to calm himself and steady his voice.

"Please ask Mrs. Lancing if she will come in, Harper," he said.

She came in almost directly.

Yesterday she had been a brown fairy; to-day she seemed to be a living violet. He never knew in detail what she wore; he was only conscious of the exquisite effect she always made. Her near approach was heralded by the sweetest, faintest whisper of the flowers she personified.

She had thrown back her veil. He noticed that, though she was smiling, she looked pale and tired.

"How good of you to see me!" she said.

"How good of you to come!" he answered in his usual grave way—the way she called "stodgy."

He pushed forward a chair for her near the fire, but she chose to sit away from it in the shadows.

"Thanks. No, I won't have tea. I have had some already—two cups, and I must not stay more than two minutes. I have some news for you," she announced. "Agnes has come up with me; I simply refused to leave Yelverton without her. And she only wanted an excuse to come." Camilla laughed as she sank into a chair. "You have not an idea what a scene of excitement there was at my house when we arrived! My children simply adore Agnes, and she adores them."

There was a little pause.

Camilla let her sables slip from her shoulders onto her arms. She had come there with a distinct purpose, a purpose that was bound about with the iron of most pressing fear and necessity.

True to her nature, she was not going to speak frankly.

It was a relief to her when Haverford spoke.

"You want me?" he queried. "I am only too delighted to do any little thing for you, Mrs. Lancing. Pray let me know what I can do."

Camilla got up and moved about a little aimlessly.

"It—it's rather a big favor, really quite an enormous one," she said. "I—I feel nervous—" Indeed, her voice broke a little.

"Don't be afraid," said Haverford. She caught her breath, and then she steadied her voice.

"Well, I have come to you because a dear friend of mine is in great trouble, Mr. Haverford," she said. "When I got home this afternoon I found a letter waiting for me. You would not know if I were to tell you her name. She lives in the country, and oh! she has had such a hard life. We—we are old, old friends, and I suppose that is why she has turned to me now and asked me to help her. I only wish I could." She broke off with a sharp sigh. "It is so hateful to feel one cannot do things of this sort for people who really need help," she said, half impatiently, half wearily.

He stood quietly by the fireplace, looking at her; he was barely conscious of what she was saying. The fragrance that floated about her, her clear voice with its pretty enunciation, the realization that she was so close, made a curious effect upon him; he felt stupid, dazed, burning hot one instant, strangely cold the next.

Camilla hurried on nervously:

"When I read that letter, Mr. Haverford, I thought immediately of you. I know I have no earthly right to bother you with things that belong to a stranger. Indeed"—she laughed faintly—"I am quite prepared to hear you say that you are surprised; that you did not think that I should do anything of this sort. I—I have come even expecting—you to refuse."

He left the fireplace and went nearer to her. The dream dropped away from him.

"Some friend of yours is in trouble?" he asked. He smiled at her. "You were quite right to come to me. I am only too glad to do anything for any one in trouble, but more especially I am glad to do anything for any one who is dear to you."

Camilla bit her lip, and moved a little away from him, approaching the fire in her turn.

"How good you are!" she said. The words were wrung from her involuntarily, and there were tears in her eyes and tears in her voice. Indeed, he moved her sharply at this moment.

There was such an element of simplicity about him and yet no weakness. He accepted her story without question. The flimsy fabrication she had just given him was merely the truth to him, essentially so because it was she who spoke.

Haverford sat down at his writing-table.

"In any matter of this kind," he said, "I beg you will use me in every way that may seem good to you, Mrs. Lancing. I gather that your friend needs immediate help; pray do not let her be troubled an hour longer than is possible."

He signed a blank check, slipped it into an envelope, and, rising, gave the envelope to her.

Camilla bit her lip sharply; then, taking the envelope, hid it in her big muff; then she began speaking gaily some nonsense, she hardly knew what.

He went with her to the entrance door, and himself put her into the cab that was waiting.

She stretched out her hand just before starting.

"I must try and say thank you," she said nervously, "but it is not so easy to say. *A demain!* Agnes and I are dining with you, remember. Good night."

He held her hand very, very closely, and let it go reluctantly.

As Camilla got out of the cab, on her arrival home, she dropped the envelope Haverford had given her. She picked it up hurriedly, and her train of thought was changed swiftly; a sudden sense of delicious independence thrilled her. The man whom she feared, and the man who had shown her such chivalrous generosity, and the man she had married and lost, passed from her thoughts. She felt as if she were in sunshine. The check was blank! She

had not expected that; there were no limits to her intentions.

In her room, she flung off her furs and then stole up-stairs softly till she reached the nursery. All was still. The two small bodies in the two small cots never stirred as she approached.

Camilla bent over each child and lightly laid a hand as in benediction on each little head.

As the nurse came into the room, Mrs. Lancing turned and, with her finger on her lip, went noiselessly from the room.

She dressed for dinner in a happy mood.

Haverford's check was locked up in her dressing-case. She had not settled yet what sum she would inscribe on it. Certainly a small sum would be useless.

"What is a thousand to him, or, for the matter of that, two?" she queried. "And even two will not go very far. Well, that is for to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV.

Camilla and Mrs. Brenton dined with Rupert Haverford the following evening.

The greater part of the large house was not open, but enough was seen to impress and delight Mrs. Brenton.

She admired everything.

"I am full of envy," she said to him.

"So am I," said Camilla.

Camilla was sitting in the place of honor. Mrs. Brenton and she were the only ladies.

As the liqueurs were being handed to him, Haverford's man addressed him confidentially.

"Could I speak to you, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Haverford looked upward; the request was unusual; then he just nodded his head.

"All right, I'll come to you in a minute."

He waited a little while, and then, when the conversation was general, and there was a movement from the dining-room, with a murmured excuse to his two women guests, he left them.

Harper was waiting for him.

"What is the matter, Harper?" he asked impatiently enough.

"I'm sorry to bring you away, sir," said the man, "but there's a young person that wants to see you, sir. I told her that you'd friends to dinner, but she wouldn't be sent away. Says she must see you. She came quite an hour ago. I put her in your study. She's come from Mrs. Baynhurst, I think, sir," the man added. "I asked her to tell me what she wanted, but she wouldn't do it. Insisted that she must speak to you yourself, sir."

Rupert Haverford gave a few orders to the man about having certain rooms lit up for Mrs. Brenton to see, and then went along the broad passage to the room where he usually sat and smoked and worked.

The girl who awaited him was standing by the fire. She turned as the door opened.

He had seen her once before, and recognized her as his mother's secretary.

"Is anything wrong?" he asked. "Have you news from Paris? Do you want me?"

Caroline Graniger looked at him steadily.

She was a tall slip of a girl, with a thin, colorless face and very large, impressive eyes.

Her dress was shabby and meager; she looked, indeed, as if she had scarcely enough on for such a cold, raw night.

"I don't know whether I ought to have come to you, Mr. Haverford," she said, "but I'm in great trouble, and as I've no one to whom I can go, and I don't quite know what to do, I thought of you."

She spoke in a staccato kind of way. The voice was rather disagreeable to Haverford.

"I shall be very glad to help you if I can," he said coldly; and then he waited for her to say more.

"Mrs. Baynhurst has sent me away," the girl said; she spoke still in that same sharp, stiff way. "A letter came from Paris this morning by a midday post, but as I have been out all day I

did not get it till late this afternoon. I have brought it with me so that you can read it."

Mr. Haverford looked annoyed. He objected strongly to interfering in anything which concerned his mother.

"I am afraid it is not possible for me to go into this matter with you," he said. "I have nothing whatever to do with Mrs. Baynhurst's affairs."

The girl answered him sharply, authoritatively.

"Some one *must* listen to me, and as you are her son, I consider it your duty to do so."

At this he wheeled round.

This kind of tone was a new experience to him in these latter days, when all who approached him had a soft word on their lips and a subservient touch in their manner.

"I think you have made a mistake," he said, thoroughly annoyed now; "if my mother has seen fit to dispense with your services she has, no doubt, the very best reason for doing so. You must apply to her. As I have just said, this is a matter in which I could not possibly interfere at any time. And now——"

"And now," said Caroline Graniger, with a short laugh, "you want to go back to your guests; to your dinner!" She shrugged her shoulders. "Then go. I was a fool to come."

She left the fireplace and walked past him to the door, but before she could get there Rupert Haverford made a move forward.

"Wait," he said. He had suddenly caught a glimpse of her face; it wore an expression that was eloquent enough to him.

She paused, and stood biting her lip and blinking her eyes to keep back her agitation. Young as she was, she suggested an element of strength.

"I have not very much time at my disposal," said Rupert quickly, "but tell me exactly what has happened. If I can help you I will."

She did not answer him immediately. When she did, that sharp, almost pert, tone had gone from her voice.

"I know quite well I have not given

Mrs. Baynhurst satisfaction," she said, "though I have tried my very best to fall in with her ways. But she is not very easy. She does not make allowances. If it were only that I should not complain." She bit her lip again. "If I am not good enough for her as a secretary, she is quite right to get some one else; but she ought to have prepared me, not dismiss me in this way. I did not go to her of my own accord. She took me away from the school where I have been living for so many years. I was given to understand that she was my guardian——" she broke off abruptly.

"What are my mother's orders?" asked Haverford very quietly.

"She says I am to go away at once, as she has no further use for me. In her letter she writes that she intends to remain in Paris for some time, and that the house in Kensington is to be shut up immediately. In fact——" the girl gave a shrug of her thin shoulders—"this is already done. I find that some one has been good enough to pack my few things in a box, and the only maid who remains informed me that she, too, had heard from Mrs. Baynhurst, and that by her mistress' orders I was to leave at once."

She looked at Rupert very steadily, and there was something of contempt in the expression of her dark eyes.

"Your mother is proverbially careless, Mr. Haverford," she said dryly; "she never troubles herself about those small things that are called duties by other people, so I suppose it has not even dawned on her that by cutting me adrift in this way she puts me in a very awkward position. I have not a penny in the world," the girl said in that same harsh, sharp way, "and no one to whom I can turn for advice or help."

She had turned very white, and she suddenly sat down in the chair near her. For an instant her eyes closed, and in that spell of silence he saw how young she was, scarcely more than a child.

She opened her eyes almost directly. "I—I beg that you will not stay any

longer," she said in that sharp, proud way; then more proudly still she added: "I am sorry now that I came."

"On the contrary," said Rupert Haverford, "I am glad that you came. You did quite rightly. You must permit me to charge myself with the care of you till we have communicated with Mrs. Baynhurst."

The girl did not answer him immediately; the gaze of her dark eyes had gone beyond him and was resting on the blaze of the fire.

"I don't want to be a trouble to anybody," she said. "I am really very independent and very strong. I would not have come to you to-night," she added, "if I had been able to go to the place where I lived for so many years; but this is lost to me now."

"Come nearer the fire," said Rupert. "I am going to send you in some dinner. I really must leave you for a little while, but I will come back again. Won't you make yourself comfortable? You had better take off your coat and hat."

She got up at once, and he helped her to remove the coat. She was painfully thin. When her hat was off he saw that she had masses of dark hair. But he scarcely realized what her appearance was; her story had surprised and troubled him sharply. He pushed a cozy chair near the fire, and gave her some papers to look at, and then hurried away.

Mrs. Brenton was waiting for him almost impatiently.

"I shall come here every day while I am in town," she declared, "and even then I am sure I shall always find something fresh to admire. I congratulate you, Mr. Haverford; you have a beautiful home."

"My house is beautiful," he corrected; "I sometimes feel I have no home. All my tastes are for small and simple things. This is so large, so much too splendid for me. It always feels so empty."

"Oh, but you are going to change all that," Agnes Brenton said, with a little laugh.

All at once there flashed across him

a suggestion that here was a woman who could possibly help him out of the difficulty of the moment.

That Caroline Graniger should remain in his house was, of course, impossible; but it was equally impossible that this young creature could be turned outside to find some lodging for herself at this late hour of the night. He knew Mrs. Brenton to be a practical woman, a woman of resource, and this was essentially a matter for a woman to deal with.

Briefly he explained to her that his mother's secretary had come to him in trouble, and there was apparently no place for her to go.

"Oh, poor girl!" said Mrs. Brenton quickly. "She must be very much upset." She paused an instant, and then said briskly: "The best thing she can do is to come back with me. Dick is not coming up for a day or two, and there is a bed in his dressing-room. We always go to these rooms," she explained, "as there is no room in Camilla's little house. Suppose I go and speak to this young lady."

Harper was in the study, arranging a dainty little dinner-table, and Caroline Graniger was sitting in the chair, looking thoroughly tired out. She turned and then rose quickly as Mrs. Brenton advanced with outstretched hand. The latter's easy bearing made the situation almost natural.

"Mr. Haverford has been telling me that you are alone by yourself just now," Mrs. Brenton said, "and as you don't seem to know where to go, I have suggested that you should come home with me, at any rate for to-night. There is a small bed in a room close to mine."

"You are very kind," said Caroline Graniger; she spoke shyly, nervously; in the presence of this womanly sympathy she lost her self-reliance a little; she almost felt inclined to cry. Only, a long time ago she had taught herself the futility of tears.

Mrs. Brenton talked on pleasantly and brightly, and her thoughts were busy.

"She looks awfully thin," she said to

herself; "if she had a little more flesh on her bones she would be rather pretty. As it is, she is decidedly interesting. Poor little soul!"

"Now, when you have had some sweets," Mrs. Brenton announced at last, "I am going to get Harper to put you in a cab, and you shall go to my rooms. I will give you a little note to take with you." She sat down at Haverford's writing-table and scribbled a few words, explaining that Miss Graniger was her guest, and desiring that the room should be made ready for her.

"You are not afraid to go alone, are you?" she asked, and Caroline Graniger only smiled as they shook hands.

"I am not afraid," she said.

Camilla floated across one of the big rooms when Mrs. Brenton reappeared up-stairs.

"Where have you been?" she asked half petulantly, as she slipped her hand through Mrs. Brenton's arm. "Haven't you finished admiring yet? It is all very beautiful and wonderful, and everything has cost a mint of money, of course; but, oh! isn't it dull? Agnes, I am ever so tired! All this sense of money is so oppressive. Suppose we go home."

"Did I hear you make an appointment for to-morrow with that dear, dull person?" Camilla queried listlessly as Mrs. Brenton and she drove homeward in Haverford's carriage.

"Yes; he is coming to see me in the morning, or, rather, to see somebody else." And then Mrs. Brenton explained further.

"I fancy his mother must be a cat," said Camilla, yawning; "they don't seem to meet very often. I am sure I am not surprised, for he is a very dreary person, you know, Agnes, my dear."

"Since when?" Mrs. Brenton spoke with some irritation. "I thought you liked him so much?"

"Oh, I change my mind occasionally." She yawned again. "The fact is, I do like him sometimes, but then again I dislike him, more often. You

see, he bores me, and life is much—much too short to be bored."

Mrs. Brenton sat silent a moment; then she said:

"Well, if that is your opinion of the man, I should not bother about him so much."

"Now you are cross with me," said Camilla, "dear old thing! You know I always speak out my thoughts with you. Oh, here we are at your lodgings already! Look here, Agnes, you must let me help you with this girl. Poor soul! She must feel pretty miserable, I expect. Why not bring her in to luncheon to-morrow?"

Mrs. Brenton kissed the speaker.

"Why will you always try and make me believe you are what you are not?" she asked half lightly, half sadly.

"Silly Agnes!" said Camilla laughingly. "It is all your own fault; you are so anxious to make me a saint, and all the time I am very much the other thing. Good night, darling."

Mrs. Lancing's maid was waiting for her mistress, and there were some letters and a note from Sir Samuel Broxbourne.

Camilla opened the note first.

It was merely a reminder that she had promised to ride with him the following morning if the weather was good.

"If I could only be sure," she said to herself; "he *seems* just the same, and yet now and then he looks at me in rather an odd way." She caught her breath. "Sammy can be so hard!"

She sat crouched up looking into the fire for a long time, then she shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, if ever the worst were to happen, and he should turn nasty, I have the money now." She got up and stood looking into the fire once again. "Only if," she said slowly, "he will not be satisfied with money, if he——"

CHAPTER V.

Caroline had been thoroughly tired out when Mrs. Brenton's maid had arranged everything and she had been left alone. But she was too tired to sleep.

The experience of the last few hours had been so new that it left her startled out of her usual quiet acquiescence. Mrs. Brenton's warm sympathy seemed to her a heaven-sent gift. She had never realized the lack of this sympathy in her life till now, nor, in truth, all the many things that she had lacked—those trivial, every-day things which stock the lives of most young creatures. Yet, for all this, she had been a happy child and a happy girl.

Her orphanhood had cast no blight upon her, and she had made pleasures for herself out of her very unpromising surroundings, as most healthy young creatures will do.

The thought of what lay in the immediate future excited her now.

"Only, I wish I knew a little more," she said restlessly to herself. "I am really very ignorant. No wonder that Mrs. Baynhurst found me useless. How she would sneer if she could know I have been trying to teach myself a little all these months! Having made up her mind to the fact that I am a fool, she would strongly object to having to acknowledge that she had made a mistake, and I am *not* a fool," said Caroline to herself, with half a sigh and half a smile.

"No, I am not a fool," she determined firmly, "and I shall demonstrate this by informing Mr. Haverford to-morrow that, whatever comes, I don't intend to go back to his mother's house. No doubt," she mused half wearily, a little later, "he will have some suggestions to offer. I dare say he will want me to go into one of his charity institutions—perhaps to the workhouse."

She laughed at this, and so, thinking and pondering, she grew drowsy by degrees, and sleep came to her just as the day—a clear, bright, frosty day—began to creep into existence.

It had been arranged between Mrs. Brenton and Haverford that Caroline Graniger should see him early in the morning, but when her maid brought the news that Caroline was still sleeping, Mrs. Brenton sent him a telegram asking him to call that afternoon instead.

It was nearly half-past nine before Caroline Graniger joined Mrs. Brenton at breakfast. The girl was greatly upset.

"I never slept late in my life before," she said. "I am generally awake about five, and I always get up soon after I wake."

"You're like me, I expect," said Mrs. Brenton. "I never sleep very well the first part of the night when I am in a strange place, and then, of course, I am drowsy in the morning."

"I was so excited," said Caroline, "I could not go to sleep. It was so strange and so delightful to be in such a nice room. I am not used to luxury. I never knew that any one could be so kind as you are. I have a much better opinion of the world this morning."

"Let us talk about yourself," said Mrs. Brenton, as she poured out the coffee. "Of course you are not going back to Mrs. Baynhurst?"

"No," said Caroline; she was silent a moment, and then she said "No" a second time. "But," she added, "I don't quite know what I *am* going to do." She stirred her coffee, and colored. When she had that color in her face she looked much younger and rather attractive. "I have been wondering if you would advise me," she said, with some hesitation.

"How old are you?" asked Mrs. Brenton.

Caroline knitted her brows.

"I believe I am about nineteen. But I don't really know. I only go by what Miss Beamish told me. That is the woman who kept the school where I lived for such a long time," she explained, "and she always said that I was about four when I first went to her."

"Four years old!" said Agnes Brenton quickly. She felt a sharp pang of pity for that little, forlorn four-year-old child of the past. "That was starting life early with a vengeance."

"Yes," said Caroline Graniger; "but we all have to begin some time or another, and as, apparently, there was no one to object, I began at four." She spoke quite cheerfully.

Agnes Brenton busied herself attending to the material comfort of her guest for a minute or two. Then she said:

"Of course I will advise you, Miss Graniger, and I shall be only too glad to help you, if I can. Just tell me what you think you could do. What would you like to do?" Mrs. Brenton asked, going straight to the point in her practical way.

"It is difficult," said Caroline Graniger, "for I don't quite know what I can do. I have no accomplishments."

Agnes Brenton fretted her brows into a slight frown.

"Do you like children?" she asked, after a little pause.

The thin, fallow face lit up.

"Children?—yes, I love children. I was a pupil-teacher two years before I left school." Then, with a rush of color to her cheeks, she added:

"But please don't let me bother you in any way, Mrs. Brenton. You have been already much too good. I dare say Mr. Haverford will arrange something for me."

Agnes Brenton was about to answer this with some kindly words when they were startled by a sharp rap with a stick on the door, and then the door was opened and Camilla presented herself.

She was in a riding-habit, and looked slim and boyish and radiant, and extraordinarily pretty and young.

"Oh, you lazy Agnes," she said, "not finished breakfast yet! Look at the time—nearly ten minutes past ten, and I have been out since half-past eight." She bent to kiss Mrs. Brenton, and then gave Caroline a smile and a little nod as Agnes Brenton hurriedly introduced them.

"You have no idea how lovely it was in the park, Agnes," she said. "There was not a scrap of fog. Thank goodness for that! Those two dear chickies of mine will be able to get out to-day. And oh, Agnes, another blow! Nurse came to me this morning, just as I was going out, with a doleful story about her father, or her mother, or somebody, being dreadfully ill, and asking me if she might go and nurse the

sick person. Isn't it too tiresome? She had been with me only a few months, but really she seemed quite a likely person. Those poor children! They do get such chopping and changing. Oh, by the way," said Camilla, "I think I had better send the horse away; I can go home in a hansom. May I ring the bell?"

She half rose, but Caroline Graniger was quicker.

"May I take your message?" she asked. She spoke shyly. This young and very pretty woman was a new experience to her. She felt a little out of the atmosphere, and, imagining swiftly that Mrs. Brenton and Mrs. Lancing might have something to say to each other, she seized the chance of leaving them together.

"Oh, thank you," said Camilla; "you are very kind. Just say to the groom that Mrs. Lancing will not ride any more to-day." "Poor little soul," said Camilla sympathetically, as the door closed, "how miserably thin she is; she looks as if she had not had enough to eat, and you are in your proper quarter, Agnes, playing the part of the good Samaritan. Well, now you must help me, my dear, because nurse is in earnest. I quite expect to find that she is gone when I get back. Oh, how I hate housekeeping! I feel half inclined to live in an hotel."

"You ought to take the children into the country," said Mrs. Brenton in her quiet way.

After awhile Camilla looked up at her friend with a quizzical expression.

"Well, Agnes," she said, and paused. Mrs. Brenton smiled.

"My dear child," she said, "I wish you would not do this sort of thing."

"What sort of thing?" asked Camilla.

"You know quite well what I mean," Mrs. Brenton said a little impatiently, "and I confess I don't understand you, Camilla. I thought you really disliked Sammy Broxbourne. You used to be always running him down, I remember."

"Oh! it's Sammy you object to, is it?" said Camilla. "My dear, dear soul, I do assure you there wasn't a creature

about this morning! That is why I enjoyed the ride. We flew through the park as if we had been a couple of birds."

"You have such a heap of people that you can go about with," said Mrs. Brenton, half impatiently; "why choose the one man that is likely to do you harm?"

"Oh, you know that is all rubbish, Agnes," Mrs. Lancing said a little impatiently in her turn. "Sammy is not a hero, but he is no worse than any other man; and then we are connected, you know, and that goes a long way."

"He is a second cousin of your late husband's," said Mrs. Brenton; "that is no kind of relationship. However," she added, "I suppose you know your own business best, and I have no right to interfere as long as you are happy, my dear child. Happiness is the one great thing, after all."

Camilla sighed a quick, impatient sigh.

"I have driven that girl away," she said abruptly, changing the subject. "She looks rather nice, Agnes. What is she going to do?"

"I was just talking things over with her," said Mrs. Brenton, "though I suppose really this is a matter for Mr. Haverford to settle. But she interests me, and I feel so sorry for her. She will not go back to his mother, that is very sure. I think she will try and get a place as nursery governess, or something of that sort. She seemed devoted to children."

"Perhaps she would do for me," said Camilla in her impulsive way.

Mrs. Brenton only smiled.

"We must go into matters a little bit more," she said, "before we can come to any conclusion."

"Well, you are going to bring her to lunch, aren't you?"

At this moment a maid brought in a telegram for Mrs. Brenton.

It was from Rupert Haverford, announcing that he would be with her directly, as in the afternoon he was unfortunately engaged.

Camilla picked up her hat and gloves in a great hurry.

"Oh, let me get away!" she said. "I don't think I will bother to have a cab. It is such a short distance, and I can walk that far. Don't forget lunch, one-thirty."

As she passed out, Camilla met Caroline Graniger on the stairs.

"Mrs. Brenton is going to bring you to lunch with me to-day," she said. "I hear you like children; I am sure you will like mine. They are two such sweethearts."

She nodded brightly and ran down the staircase.

Mrs. Brenton gave Caroline Haverford's telegram to read.

"Perhaps it is as well that he should come over early," she said, "then we can have the rest of the day to ourselves."

When Haverford arrived Mrs. Brenton left Miss Graniger and him together.

"I telegraphed to my mother first thing this morning," said Rupert Haverford, breaking rather a slightly awkward pause as the door closed behind Mrs. Brenton. "I hope to have some communication from her during the day."

"Yes?" said Caroline Graniger. She had fallen back into her stiff attitude of the night before.

"I have asked her for an explanation. Meanwhile," Rupert added, "I want to arrange something for you. Mrs. Brenton has been extremely kind, but I feel sure you will not like to encroach on that kindness." He put some bank-notes on the table. "I have brought you twenty pounds," he said; "with that I dare say you can manage for a little while, and I know of a place where you can stop till we have heard satisfactorily from my mother."

"I don't think it matters very much what your mother writes," Caroline Graniger said shortly; "she may have explanations to give you, and I shall certainly require such explanations later, but I have determined to cut myself adrift from Mrs. Baynhurst for good and all." She paused an instant, and then, coloring vividly, she said:

"I—I will accept the loan of five pounds, Mr. Haverford; it will be quite enough, and I shall be very glad to stay at this place you speak of till I get some kind of work."

"I advise you to take the twenty pounds," said Haverford a little dryly; "you may want to buy things. You can repay me at some future date. This is the address of the lady who will be very glad to give you house room for a little while. She is a woman who does a great deal of work for me, and, as she is in contact with all kinds and conditions of people, she may be able to find you employment."

Mrs. Brenton came back at that moment, and Haverford told her what he had arranged.

"Well, I dare say that will be all right, but I cannot part with Miss Graniger till to-morrow, or, perhaps, a day or so later," said Mrs. Brenton in her brisk, pleasant manner. "As a matter of fact, I have some ideas of my own which I should like to discuss with her. You won't mind staying with me a little while longer, will you?" she said, turning with a smile to Caroline. The girl did not answer; she bit her lip sharply.

She turned away and stood looking out of the window while Mrs. Brenton chatted on lightly to Mr. Haverford, and in a few minutes he took his leave.

"Now, I must write some letters," Agnes Brenton said briskly. "Just make yourself cozy by the fire, and look at these papers."

Caroline took the papers, but they lay in her lap untouched.

The sense of unreality, the delightful excitement, that had held Caroline as in a spell throughout the night, had sway with her again now; nothing was very tangible or distinct. Rupert Haverford had brought her spirit to earth and hard facts for a few moments, but as he had left the house the range of resentful feeling he had roused had gone with him. She even passed away from the vexation of having to be temporarily obliged to him. As she rested back in the comfortable chair, looking at the glory of the winter sky, she felt

that she and happiness had really met for the first time.

"There," exclaimed Mrs. Brenton, "my letter to Dick is written. Mrs. Lancing insisted on bringing me up to town, and I had scarcely time to explain things, or arrange my household affairs. Happily, Dick is an old hand at housekeeping." She broke off and turned in her chair.

From the staircase beyond there came all at once the sound of an important approach; there was a great stamping of feet, accompanied by observations in clear, high-pitched little voices.

"Camilla's children!" said Mrs. Brenton.

As she put down her pen and rose, the door was opened very widely, and two small persons entered hand in hand.

Caroline had never seen two prettier little mortals, or two so daintily attired.

They flung themselves on Mrs. Brenton, and hugged her with enthusiasm.

"Good morning, Auntie Brenny," said Betty, the eldest, and she settled her ruffled plumage as she spoke. "Aren't you very pleased to see us? We comed because we have brought you this letter from mother, and because we promised to come." She advanced to Caroline and took her little sister with her. "Good morning," she said; "how d'ye do? Say 'Good morning, Baby.'"

Baby put out a tiny hand in a white woolen glove with fingers that were much too large.

"*Dormez bien!*" she said, with an angelic smile and a doubtful accent.

She cuddled up to Caroline to be kissed, and then, detaching herself from her sister, went and seated herself at the table, while Betty administered correction.

"*'Dormez bien,'* is not 'good morning,' Baby; it's 'good night,'" she said; then she looked at Caroline and shrugged her shoulders. "Baby does say such extra-ninary things," she observed.

"We must go, now, or we shall get

no walk," said Dennis, the maid, who was in charge of the children.

But Betty and Baby were hanging on to Caroline.

"We want you to come out with us," was their cry; and Betty added magniloquently: "We'll be most awful good if you'll come, too."

Mrs. Brenton smiled into Caroline's eyes.

"Put on your things and have a good run with them," she said; and she stood at the window and watched them with a smile till they were out of sight, then sat down to her writing again.

"It might be the very thing both for the girl and the children," she mused.

CHAPTER VI.

Caroline returned from her walk flushed and disheveled, but happy-eyed. It was almost impossible to recognize in her the thin, white-faced, rather defiant girl of the night before.

"What dear little loves!" she exclaimed, as she and Mrs. Brenton met. She had accompanied the children back to their home, and was rather late in making her appearance.

A note which had come from Camilla had urged Mrs. Brenton to be with Mrs. Lancing at least a quarter of an hour before lunch-time.

Caroline rather drew back from the thought of accepting Mrs. Lancing's invitation.

"She is really very, very kind," she said earnestly, "but still I don't know that I ought to go to lunch."

Agnes Brenton answered this promptly.

"Of course you must come with me. Camilla is the most hospitable person in the world, and I know she will be very disappointed if you don't go. She has taken a fancy to you."

Mrs. Brenton did not think it desirable to add more than this. She knew Camilla so well.

It would be unkind to put false hopes into the girl's mind; in all probability, the suggestion Camilla had made about Miss Graniger would have passed already from her thoughts.

So it was settled, and Caroline made her modest toilet. That is to say, she arranged her hair carefully, and put on her shabby hat and coat with more consideration than she had ever worn them before.

When they reached Mrs. Lancing's small house, Camilla, who had evidently been waiting for them, pounced on them both, and drew them into the drawing-room.

"The children are quite mad about you, Miss Graniger," she said, "and they have been entreating me to let you stay with them. I wish you would! I am so tired of having ignorant and unsympathetic people about them. Agnes was telling me this morning that you would like to be with children. Why shouldn't you be with mine?"

Caroline did not find it very easy to speak.

Mrs. Lancing's manner charmed and yet startled her; it was so new, too, and so pleasant to be addressed in this semi-familiar, easy fashion.

When she found her voice it was to make a protest.

"I do love children," she said, "and it would be a great happiness to me to be with yours. But you don't know anything about me. I am sure you would want some one cleverer and better than I am, and then—" Caroline paused an instant. "Mrs. Baynhurst is sure to give me a very bad character," she added hurriedly.

Camilla snapped her fingers.

"I am not going to trouble about Mrs. Baynhurst," she said. "Everybody knows that she is a crank. Look here, we'll settle all sorts of things afterward." And so it rested for the time being.

Caroline was fascinated into compliance. Camilla's pretty ways won her heart very much as the children had won it. There was something magnetic in the sympathy that pervaded her.

After luncheon, when the children had been in and been petted to their heart's content, Camilla said, quite in a matter-of-fact way:

"Now, darlings, kiss Aunt Agnes and run away. Miss Graniger, I think it

must be another walk, it is such a lovely day; but please come in quite early."

The two little persons disappeared with a right good will, and as the friends were left alone they heard sounds of laughter and singing, signs of joy at freedom, from the staircase beyond.

Camilla was very much perturbed that afternoon as the result of a call from her sister-in-law, Violet Lancing, who had never approved of Camilla, and made no effort to hide the fact. "I must be a horribly wicked woman," Camilla said to Agnes Brenton, after her unwelcome guest had departed. "Otherwise I could not possibly have been given such a scourge as being compelled to take bread from such people."

"I thought a long time ago," said Mrs. Brenton, in her calm, quiet way, "you had realized what to expect from Violet Lancing. Dear child, it is hardly possible that she should be sympathetic to you."

"I don't care two figs about her," said Camilla, "and, as a matter of fact, I am rather sorry for her. It's the old man whom I really hate. Ned always said his father was an old devil, and so he is! It appears he is extra furious with me because I never take the children to see him. How can I? If he forgets all the horrible things he did and said to me, I have unfortunately a much better memory!" She moved restlessly. "Oh, I wish I could cut them all out of my life, especially the old man! What a difference to my daddy! Oh, Agnes— But there, never mind, let us talk about that girl Caroline—what's her name?"

Mrs. Brenton said:

"Well, I don't think you ought to do anything without consulting Mr. Haverford."

"I really don't see what Mr. Haverford has to do with it."

"Don't you?" queried Mrs. Brenton, with a smile. "You must remember that Miss Graniger went to him last night for advice and help."

Camilla moved impatiently.

"Oh, he will take a month to deliberate; he is so slow. Really, it is very ridiculous. You know I must have some one for the children, and Miss Graniger wants work. Why on earth should she not come to me?"

"I don't like things done in a great hurry," said Mrs. Brenton. And then she added again: "It may annoy Mr. Haverford."

"And what do I care if it does?" exclaimed Camilla. She was nervous, and it did her good to speak sharply. "Anyhow, I can't very well draw back now. I have practically engaged the girl, and I settled that we would discuss terms and other things this afternoon. I like her, Agnes. She is a lady, and I think she is just the very person we want for Betty. How much do you think I ought to give her, Agnes? Fifty pounds a year?"

"My dear child!" said Mrs. Brenton, and then she sighed. "When will you learn the value of money?"

"Well, look here," said Camilla, sitting down on the stool and putting a pleading note in her voice, "will you arrange all this for me? I don't want to let this girl slip through my fingers. I am going to write to Mr. Haverford now," she added, "and then I hope you will be satisfied, you dear old fidgety frump."

The note written, she had it despatched by a cab, and requested that an answer might be sent back.

"I don't see what objection he can have," Camilla said, "but if he has any—well, now let him speak, or forever hold his peace."

The cab came back in a very little while, bringing the information that Mr. Haverford had been called to the north unexpectedly. Further, it appeared that the butler had added that Mr. Haverford intended going to Paris when he came down from the north.

Mrs. Brenton smiled as she sipped her tea.

"That means he intends to see his mother, and go thoroughly into this Graniger business. There are no half measures with him."

Camilla moved petulantly.

"Oh, we all know by this time that you think him a paragon of perfection. He is just your pet idea of what a man should be—solid, stodgy, prosaic. A creature as flat and as level and as enduring and as uninteresting as a Roman road."

"Well," said Mrs. Brenton, "there is a good deal to be said in favor of a smooth road, whether it is Roman or otherwise."

"You can keep all your smooth roads to yourself, Agnes; give me Piccadilly, when the wood pavement is simply honeycombed with holes, and one stands the chance of being jerked out of a cab, and perhaps out of existence, too, every other moment. Anyhow," she determined brightly, "this settles matters so far as I am concerned. Miss Graniger will now stay, and if Mr. Haverford does not like this arrangement—well, he can lump it!"

CHAPTER VII.

For a second time Caroline Graniger lay awake late into the night.

She had been sent to bed very early.

"You look so tired, you poor thing," Camilla had said as they had sat at dinner.

She herself was going out to a bridge party, but she had insisted on Agnes Brenton and Caroline sharing a dainty little dinner with her.

Of course it was at her suggestion that Miss Graniger was sleeping with the children.

"As you are going to stay with me," she had said, when she carried a little while in the nursery after Mrs. Brenton had gone down-stairs, "I think we had better start as we intend to go on. Agnes, I know, wants to carry you home again with her to-night, but Betty and Baby want you—don't you, darlings?"

It was Caroline who introduced the subject of Rupert Haverford.

"I fancy Mrs. Brenton thinks I ought to have referred things to Mr. Haverford," she had said, a little hesitatingly.

"I know," Mrs. Lancing had answered quickly, "but I don't in the least

see that. Of course you went to Mr. Haverford last night because you did not know what else to do. But surely that does not entitle him to order all your ways? I shall be awfully disappointed if you don't stay with me," she finished; and Caroline had laughed softly at this.

"Then you shall not be disappointed," she had answered.

And so everything had been arranged, and when Mrs. Lancing had whisked away for a long—and a late—evening at cards, Mrs. Brenton had kissed the girl and told her to go to rest.

"Camilla is right; you do look very tired," she said.

"Oh, I am always pale, but I am not really tired—I am only happy."

There was something familiar to her to find herself occupying a small bed in a room with children, but this was the only element that was familiar; all the rest was so new and so sweet.

After so many barren years these last few hours seemed overfull with sympathy and kindness, and with that recognition from others that almost amounted to kinship.

She found herself endowed with a personality all at once.

"But it is too good to last," she said to herself once or twice. "I know something will happen, and I shall go out into the cold again."

Of course she could not sleep; she thought of a dozen things at the same time.

The spell of Camilla's magnetic personality, the calm strength and womanliness of Agnes Brenton, the charm and prattle of the children, held her in sway alternatively, and kept alive that new sense of warmth that had been kindled in her heart.

Every now and then, too, Rupert Haverford would come into her thoughts.

A note had been sent round from Mrs. Brenton's lodgings addressed to herself, and given to her just as she was going up-stairs. In this Haverford had written that he regretted that he was called north on very important

matters, but that he had spoken to the lady of whom he had told her, and that a home was arranged for her until she could make other plans.

"My absence may delay the explanation you desire from my mother," Rupert had written, "but in the event of your requiring any reference, you will, of course, use my name."

It was a brief and very businesslike letter, but Caroline felt grateful to him all the same. Assuredly he must have troubled himself about her even to have made such arrangements.

Once, indeed, she felt a little qualm.

"Perhaps Mrs. Brenton was right, and I ought to have asked his advice." The next moment, however, she dismissed this. "It cannot matter to him how I earn my bread."

Mrs. Brenton went back to the country the next day.

It had been arranged that her husband would follow her to town; but instead of doing this, he managed to contract a very bad cold, and as he was not the strongest man in the world, his wife took alarm, and departed in a hurry for Yelverton, notwithstanding Camilla's entreaties.

"But remember," Mrs. Brenton said as she went, "you have promised to come to me for Christmas; that is understood, Camilla. It will be delightful to have the children, and we must have a Christmas tree and a jolly time altogether."

"I am not sure that I shall know you in the future," replied Camilla. "I think it is horrid of you to go rushing back now, just because Dick has happened to sneeze twice."

Caroline saw the children's mother only intermittently during the next two or three days.

Mrs. Lancing always seemed to be in a tremendous hurry. Except for breakfast, she did not have a single meal in the house.

Nevertheless, the atmosphere was charged with a certain sort of excitement. The telephone-bell was always ringing; so was the door-bell.

Mrs. Lancing's friends seemed to

employ an army of telegraph boys, and she herself would dash home in cabs every now and then, in a violent hurry apparently. Though she might neglect or postpone other duties, she never forgot a flying visit to the nursery at bath-time.

The clamor of the children, however, and the nonsense and the kisses, precluded anything further than the interchange of smiles and a few words between Mrs. Lancing and her new governess.

Camilla found time to scribble a few words, conveying her increased good opinion of Caroline, to Agnes Brenton, and added:

I have had a letter from the old man commanding me to take the children to spend Christmas with him. I have not answered him, but I mean to tell him to go to—church on Christmas morning. If I am going to be with you, I cannot go to the Lancings', can I?

Caroline was far too busy in these the first days of new occupation to give much heed to the fact that Rupert Haverford had sent no answer to the letter she had written to him.

Naturally, the life was not so golden-hued in these after days as it had seemed that first day.

She found the children, if not exactly spoiled, certainly not trained as they should have been trained.

She saw that it was necessary to change any number of accepted habits. When she learned how irregular had been the nursery arrangements, she marveled that her little charges were so healthy or so tractable.

Dennis, the maid, gave her great assistance.

"You keep things down, my dear. Don't you be afraid of having your own way. The mistress won't interfere. She trusts every one. That's why she gets done so often."

That there had been waste and extravagance to an almost criminal degree Caroline had quickly discovered for herself. Dennis had told her that the children possessed more feathers and frills, more lace frocks, than any other two children in the United King-

dom; and this was no exaggeration. In all things that were practical and necessary, however, they were as shabby, and as ragged as any little beggar in the street.

For a day or two the girl hesitated as to whether she should approach Mrs. Lancing on this subject. She was really unwilling to do so, but finally decided it was better that she should go straight to the point in this and all other matters connected with the children and her care of them.

And so one evening, as Camilla was dressing for an early dinner engagement, there came a knock at her door, and Dennis asked if she would see Miss Graniger.

Mrs. Lancing was sitting in front of her looking-glass, her short, wavy hair loose on her shoulders.

At sight of Caroline she took alarm, and, turning round, waved her hair-brush protestingly.

"Don't tell me that you have come to give me notice," she said forcibly, "because I won't take it!"

Caroline laughed.

"I am still marveling at my good fortune in being with you," she said. She looked admiringly at Camilla. How pretty, how very pretty, this woman was! Each time that she saw Mrs. Lancing she seemed to see her in a more attractive way. There was an unconscious wistfulness in Camilla Lancing's eyes that waked a strong rush of tenderness and protective affection in Caroline's heart whenever she looked into them.

Camilla heaved a sigh of relief. "I breathe again," she said. "Are the chickies asleep? Dear child, I must congratulate you! You are a marvelous person. We have never had such peace in the house as we have had since you have been here."

"I am so glad you are satisfied with me," Caroline said, and then she added: "I have come to bother you. I have brought a list of the things that the children want."

"Do they want anything? They had new coats and hats the day you came," said Mrs. Lancing.

She took the paper that Caroline handed her, and read it aloud.

"Now, isn't this shocking, Dennis?" said Camilla, with a note of desperation in her voice. "Doesn't it make you want to *shake* nurse? What did she do with the things? She must have eaten them. My poor little sweethearts, fancy not having a stocking, or a decent petticoat!" She caught her breath with a sigh. "I am afraid I am not a very good mother."

"I'm sure you pay enough, ma'am," said Dennis. "Why, the money has just been poured out for the nursery this last year."

"Well, money is not everything, we all know that," her mistress said, as she took up her hand-glass and looked at the back of her head critically.

Here the sound of a cab stopping reached her ears.

"Oh, my goodness!" said Camilla, "that must be Sammy, and, of course, I am late! Dennis, get me into my gown quickly—quickly!"

Caroline moved to the door.

"Good night," she said. "I hope you are going to enjoy yourself."

Camilla called her back.

"Do one thing for me, like a darling, will you?" she asked. "Just run down and tell Sir Samuel that I shall be with him directly. I promised faithfully to be on time, and he does so hate to be kept waiting."

Some one was being shown up into the drawing-room as Caroline left Mrs. Lancing's bedroom.

She paused a moment, and then went down the stairs.

Caroline's first impression as she opened the drawing-room door was that the young man standing with his back to the fireplace was much too big for the room.

Sir Samuel had not troubled to remove his overcoat, and the heavy fur collar on this coat accentuated the squareness and breadth of his shoulders.

He always looked red, as if he had just come out of a bath, or had been running; his hair, too, had a touch of red in it.

Caroline took all this in at one glance, and she decided right away that he was a very ugly young man.

"Mrs. Lancing begs me to say she will be down directly," she said; but she did not advance into the room.

Sir Samuel whipped his single eyeglass into what he called his "off" eye, and took a step forward. As Caroline was withdrawing, and the door was half closed, he spoke to her.

"Here, I say," he said, "can you—I mean, is there any one in the house who can glue this button on for me?"

He pulled off one of his white gloves as he spoke, and held it out to her.

With a little frown Caroline turned, paused an instant, and then advanced and took the glove from him.

"It's a beastly nuisance when the buttons come off," said Sir Samuel; "the Johnnies that sell gloves ought to do the stitching themselves—eh?"

He was studying Caroline attentively, wondering the while who the deuce she was.

"I think this button is quite firm; it will not come off just yet," said Caroline; and she gave him back the glove.

Before he could speak again she had vanished, and the door was shut behind her.

Sir Samuel pulled the glove on with a jerk.

"D—d fine eyes," he said, "but she knows all about that, and puts frills on in consequence."

Mrs. Lancing's door was widely open, and she herself was just coming out as Caroline mounted the stairs. Mrs. Lancing paused by the girl and kissed her lightly.

"You are a nice thing," she said affectionately, "and I wish you were coming with me. I shall take you to the play one night." Then, gathering up her skirts, she rustled softly onto the landing and disappeared.

Sir Samuel's patience had evidently evaporated; he had emerged from the drawing-room, and was now expostulating.

"Don't swear too audibly," Caroline heard Mrs. Lancing say, with her rip-

pling laugh, "or you will wake the babies, and then everybody will call you a monster!"

The girl's delicate brows met in a frown. Even in this far-off way she felt the arrogant familiarity of this man's manner toward Mrs. Lancing, and resented it, just as she had resented his attempt at impertinent familiarity with herself. She found herself wondering a little why so refined and dainty a woman as Camilla should care for friendship with such a man.

This was not the only matter that seemed strange and even inexplicable where Mrs. Lancing was concerned. But, still, it needed no deep study to grasp the best and sweetest traits of so human a being as Camilla, nor was it necessary for worldly knowledge to open her eyes to the glaring faults, the amazing contrasts, in this woman's character.

The first time she had heard Mrs. Lancing tell a lie—quite pleasantly, and without the slightest effort or hesitation—Caroline had winced; it had been such a trivial, such a petty untruth; but what had given it importance in Caroline's eyes, accentuating the unworthiness of the act, had been the fact that both the children had been present, and that Betty had laughed at her mother's cleverness as at an excellent joke.

To doubt the woman's anxious, deep-rooted love for her children was to doubt the light of the sun itself; but Caroline summed it up as a love without discrimination or any sense of real responsibility.

Camilla Lancing would have been agast if any one had told her this; for there would be no sacrifice too great—of this the girl was convinced—for the mother to undertake on behalf of her children, if circumstances should demand it of her.

Dennis, who was a garrulous person, was fond of dilating on her mistress' little ways; but she was loyal. It was soon made evident that she was very fond of Mrs. Lancing.

"She never had no proper chance," she said this night to Caroline, as they made notes and agreed to buy only

what was absolutely necessary. "Started out, she did, with everything that money can give. My sister was a second housemaid in her old home. That was before her father lost everything and they came down to next to nothing. Miss Camilla was only a bit of a child then, and if Sir Edmund had done the proper thing by her he would have let his sister take her. You see, his wife died when Miss Camilla was born. But he wouldn't part with her—and so they went wandering about goodness knows where, never staying more nor a month in any place. How I came to know so much was because I took service with Sir Edmund's sister, Lady Settlewood, and a hard place I had with her, too; a little bit different to what I get now! Her ladyship was for ever wantin' to have Miss Camilla to live with her—she'd no children of her own. But even if the father would have given her up, Miss Camilla wouldn't have left him, neither."

Caroline interposed here a little gently:

"Perhaps Mrs. Lancing would rather not have these things talked about, Dennis."

But Dennis only shrugged her shoulders.

"She knows there'll be nothing told bad if it's told by me," she said; "besides," added the woman, "I'm telling you this because you're the first person as has come into this house as I'd care to see stay in, and that's the truth. My dear," said the maid, straightening herself for a minute, "she wants a friend awful badly. Some one different to me. There's things she could talk to you about which she couldn't talk to me."

Dennis was silent for awhile, then she said:

"Poor Sir Edmund, he just broke his heart when Miss Camilla run off with Captain Lancing. You see, he'd never taken any heed of the fact as Miss Camilla was a beauty. He looked on her as no more nor a child. And so she was a child," said Dennis hotly, as if she were suddenly defending her mistress against some accuser. "How could *she* know what she was doing?

Wasn't he handsome enough to turn the head of any girl? Who was to think that he'd be such a blackguard, and he coming of such a sanctimonious, church-going lot? If them sort of folk is saints, give me sinners, I say!"

Caroline was fascinated, even excited, by this story of Camilla Lancing's early history; at the same time, she shrank from hearing these things unknown to Camilla. But when Dennis was started on this subject it was hard to stop her.

"Well, she came to know the truth, poor dear, when it was too late; when her father was in his grave, and her ladyship wouldn't hear her name spoke. Oh, some folk is hard, and no mistake! There was a woman with a comfortable three thousand a year, and not a soul to leave it to but Miss Camilla; and if you believe me, when she went there wasn't even the name of the poor child mentioned in the will! That's what's forced her to turn round and let these Lancings do for her. Her father had left her what he had, but, bless you, that went no way with the captain having the handling of it!"

The parlor-maid brought up a letter for Caroline at this moment, and she put it on one side till she was alone.

When everything was thoroughly well arranged Dennis said "good night."

Caroline opened her letter when she was undressed.

It was from Rupert Haverford—a tardy answer to the few lines she had sent him. Nothing could have been colder than this letter.

Though he made no definite expression of objection, Caroline felt that he was sharply annoyed at what she had done. This fact annoyed her in its turn.

"So Mrs. Brenton was right," she said to herself; "and he is angry. It is very unreasonable and rather absurd. I suppose he expects everybody to give him the obedience of slaves, that any sort of independence is objectionable to him. Well, he is mistaken as far as I am concerned. It is my business to be independent, to think and act for myself, and I am assuredly not going to

throw up this work just to please Mr. Haverford."

She read the letter through twice.

It not only annoyed her, it disquieted her. She realized in this moment that she was changing, that the innumerable new sensations through which she was passing had taken from her altogether that kind of sullenness, that apathy, that had fallen upon her like a cloak during her stay with Mrs. Baynhurst.

Then, again, contact with Camilla's charming personality was, like her brief intercourse with Mrs. Brenton, an awakening influence.

Haverford's cold words of annoyance came most inopportunistically.

It was only natural, perhaps, that she should misunderstand him.

"Perhaps he thinks that I asked for this work," she said to herself; and she flushed hotly with humiliation as the thought came. "I wish I had not gone to him! And yet," was her next quick thought, "if I had not gone I should not be here. Well, when I have paid him back the money he lent me, there will be no need to trouble about him any more."

She laughed a little shortly to herself.

"If I had refused this work, that would have been wrong."

It was growing late, so she turned the light low, and then went to bed. There she lay thinking the matter over and over again.

It was very strange, but a decided feeling of regret came in place of annoyance the more she pondered on the situation.

She had grown accustomed to hear Rupert Haverford discussed and denounced in the bitterest fashion by his mother. Just for this very reason she had determined that it was probable that this man would be rich in those qualities that were so lacking in his mother. Indeed, it was the conviction that he was just and honest and straightforward that had driven her toward him when she had found herself so greatly in need of help. And he had not belied this belief in him. When he had convinced himself that she had an un-

doubted claim on his mother, he had without hesitation stepped into the breach and taken upon himself the right to protect and to provide for her. And viewing the matter in this quiet, practical way, it did not take Caroline very long to assure herself that she had not done exactly what she ought to have done.

"I shall write to him to-morrow, and I shall try and let him feel that I am sorry. Very probably he won't trouble himself any more about the matter; still, I shall write all the same."

And, soothed by this determination, Caroline nestled down into the pillows and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

Camilla came home very late that night.

She had dined with Sir Samuel and another couple at one of the big restaurants. After that she had gone to the play, and lastly she had gone back to supper at the house of a certain woman who affected a great regard for her, and there she had played cards with her usual disastrous luck.

She had driven home alone, tired, depressed, and yet conscious of an enormous relief.

For Broxbourne had spoken that night of going out of town immediately. This he had said when they had been alone, and the conversation had so tended that had he been prepared to bring forward the subject she so dreaded to hear, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for him to have done so.

But Sir Samuel had said nothing. Evidently he was still aware that he had it in his power to make her suffer.

"And if he does go," Camilla said to herself wearily, as she alighted at her own door and passed into the silent house, "that means that I can breathe again. Oh, I wish he would go! I am not afraid of him as I was in the old days, but I loathe him just as much. He is more hateful than ever. He was always coarse and hateful, but now he is

worse. Nothing can be beautiful in life when such a man is close to one."

Some letters for her were lying on the table. She gathered them together without looking at them, turned out the light, and mounted the stairs quietly.

Late as it was, a bright fire was still burning in the grate, and her room was warm and cozy.

She sat down in the big easy chair in front of the fire.

Her thoughts still hovered about Broxbourne.

"If he will only go away," she said feverishly, "I shall feel free to breathe again; free of one horrible burden, at all events! And he spoke very definitely of going to-night. Now I am sure," she said the next moment, "he can know nothing. If he had, he must have let me realize this in some way or other. If I could only set the matter right unknown to him!" She gave a long sigh, and shut her eyes for a moment. "What a lot of things there are to set right! What a fearful lot!"

She sat with her eyes closed for a little while, and then she rose suddenly, and her letters were scattered on the ground. As she stooped and picked them up she glanced at the writing on each.

One was from Agnes Brenton, the others looked like bills, with the exception of one that was addressed in a handwriting she knew and feared only too well.

It was a letter from Colonel Lancing, her husband's father.

Camilla bit her lip sharply and trembled. Then with a sort of grim shadow on her face she tore open the envelope.

It was a horrible letter for Camilla Lancing to read. Clearly, coldly, uncompromisingly, the writer put before her his knowledge of all those many facts that she had worked so hard to keep concealed from him. Her life of debt and difficulty, her extravagances, her gambling, her friends, and her follies were denounced in hard, deliberate terms.

She was judged without mercy, without a chance of defense; and her sen-

tence was written in the same hard, merciless way.

Colonel Lancing announced that the allowance he had made her since his son's death was taken from her; her independence was to cease at once.

My son's children have been left too long in the miserable atmosphere of the life you affect; they are no longer infants, and I claim them. They will come to my home and be reared in the way they should be reared, and if you conform to my commands you may live with them. But let us understand one another clearly. Here there will be permitted no reckless folly, no sinful waste; none of those things that have brought you to where you are. You will be given a place with my daughters, because you are the children's mother, and for no other reason; your life will be ordered entirely by me, and in accordance with what I hold to be proper and fit for a woman in your position. Refuse this and I wash my hands of you; you may sink to what depth you like. But the children shall not sink. I have been patient too long, have hoped too long. I now see that there is no good in you, and I mean to stand between these children and the harm you would do them.

Camilla stood like one transfixed. The letter fluttered from her hand and lay on the floor.

This blow had fallen so suddenly, so unexpectedly. She had always known that she was an object of dislike, even of hatred, to her husband's people, that her claim upon them was recognized grudgingly; but she had quickly taught herself to think about them as little as possible. Her dependence only angered her when it had seemed to demand something of her. It was not the hurt to herself that sent the blood running like ice in her veins; it was this stern revelation of authority, this demand for her children and the knowledge that, placed as she was, defiance to that authority was out of the question.

The silent emptiness of the room came upon her all at once as the clock on the mantel-piece chimed three.

It seemed to her as if already she were alone; as if already she had been robbed of those little lives that made everything sweet, even the darkest hour.

"I am frightened," she said to herself. "I am frightened—frightened! What shall I do?"

She began to pace the room, averting her eyes from the letter that lay on the floor.

Then all at once she stood still. Her expression changed. Her face flamed with color, and she commenced with cold, feeble fingers to get out of her beautiful gown.

She tore at the hooks; she had no thought for the delicacy of the lace or the fragility of the material. She almost spurned the gown with her foot as it slipped from her; and she veritably threw aside the jewelry she had worn.

She paused only to fold herself in her warm dressing-gown and to shed her high-heeled satin shoes on her way to the door. Then softly, and with that same curious fever urging her on, she mounted the stairs cautiously till she stood outside the room where her children slept.

Caroline was a light sleeper. She started up in bed nervously as she heard the door open and some one move softly into the room.

"Who is it?" she asked. "Who is there? Has anything happened?"

Camilla came to the foot of the bed. She could not speak; she was breathing with difficulty. At first the girl could not distinguish her clearly, the light was so dim; but almost immediately she recognized her, and, slipping in haste from the bed, she went at once to the bowed figure that sat rocking itself to and fro, moaning rather than breathing, as if suffering very much.

"You are ill; what can I do for you? Tell me. Oh, please tell me!" Caroline said, her nerves all ajar.

Camilla caught at her two hands.

"I—I have had a shock," she said, "and I am frightened—very frightened. I cannot stay alone. I want to be near the children. I *must* have the children with me. I have come to take them down-stairs."

"If you will go down-stairs," said Caroline quietly and gently, "I will bring the children down. I don't think they will wake. Make the bed ready and turn the lights low. I think we will put them into the blankets; they will not feel the cold that way."

It made her heart ache sharply to see the pitiful eagerness with which Camilla did her bidding.

Both journeys were accomplished satisfactorily; neither child woke, though Baby for a moment opened her sleepy eyes, as though she would have questioned what was passing with her.

When they were both laid in Camilla's capacious bed—and by the sound of their breathing the two listeners had assured themselves that their rest was unbroken—the mother went up to Caroline and kissed her; and then she put her arms round the girl and clung to her.

"Don't think me mad," she said hoarsely; "to-morrow I will tell you all."

"You are so cold," said Caroline unevenly; "won't you have something? Let me get you a little brandy?"

She insisted upon putting Mrs. Lancing in the chair in front of the fire, and then she went down to the dining-room and brought back the liquor.

Camilla thanked her with a wan smile, and urged the girl a second time to go back to her bed. But Caroline would not leave her at once.

She was a little alarmed at Mrs. Lancing's look; and she knelt down, chafing first the cold, slender hands, and then the small, cold feet.

The stimulant had already commenced to put a little sign of warmth and life into Camilla; the misery in her expression was breaking a little.

There was a long pause. Caroline still chafed the small feet.

"You are warm now," at last said Caroline brightly; "do let me help you into bed. You will feel so much better there, and the children will keep you warm. Won't they be surprised when they wake up and find themselves in your bed?"

The smile that came into Mrs. Lancing's eyes was very pleasant to the girl kneeling beside her to see.

Her heart began to beat a little less nervously. The fear and the uneasiness began to slip from her. When she would have got up Camilla held her back a moment.

"You have been so good to me," she

said in a broken way, "and you give me such a sense of strength, of comfort. I have never had any one about me like you before."

Caroline smiled. There was a great sweetness in her face.

"Do let me help you undress. I am sure you ought to be in bed," she urged.

She got her away, and a little later, after she had tended Camilla as if she had been a tired child, she stood and looked at the mother nestling down in the bed between those two small, slumbering forms; and the sight brought tears to her eyes.

"I am going to stay a little while, in case you want me," she whispered.

Camilla heard her as in a dream.

The hot agony had passed from her heart—a sense of exhaustion fell upon her; she lay with a hand touching each of her children; and Caroline moved about the room softly, putting it in order.

When all was done she paused and listened quite a long time.

Mrs. Lancing never moved; she had fallen asleep.

"Poor creature!" said Caroline to herself.

She stole softly away, but the room up-stairs had such a desolate look she could not stay in it; so, as sleep was impossible now, she dressed quickly, and went back to Mrs. Lancing's room, still in the same soft way.

"I may be of some use," she said.

She sat in the chair by the fire and she watched the bed. It gave her a sense of extraordinary gladness to see those three so closely together; in this moment she seemed to share in their union; she ceased to be a stranger.

CHAPTER IX.

Although he had both telegraphed and written to ask for some statement concerning Caroline Graniger from his mother, Rupert Haverford, of course, never expected to receive a prompt answer; indeed, he was quite prepared to have no answer at all.

He left orders that all his letters were to be forwarded to him while he was in

the north; and Caroline's little epistle traveled thither with the rest of his enormous correspondence.

He made no haste to reply to it. As usual, he found much to occupy him when he arrived at that dirty, smoky, northern town.

At heart he was glad to be away from London again, even for a little while. Not that he expected to be able to put Camilla out of his thoughts, for even in the dull, prosaic, unlovely surroundings of the factory, remembrance of this woman haunted him in so tangible a way that at times he could almost have imagined she was close beside him.

He was a little impatient with himself at times that it should be this one particular woman who held him.

Of course he knew her history as the world knew it. Most people were kind about Camilla. There had been nothing subtle in the way in which her husband had wronged her.

It was the knowledge of this wrong done to her that drew Haverford to her so surely. He longed to give her protection, to build up barriers between her and all those things that had been legacies of her married life.

And, of course, there was only one way in which he could do this.

All at once he realized that he had ceased to doubt or speculate as to the future of such a marriage; hope became deliberate intention. And still the path was not clear. He knew his own heart, but what about Camilla's?

He wanted to be sure of her. He wanted to hold her in his arms as that other man had held her. He wanted to lock her to him, to feel that she belonged to him.

"I shall go back to-morrow," he settled.

But he did not go south on the morrow. He found himself plunged into a mass of business confronted with difficulties.

At last, however, he found himself back in London. The very first afternoon he went to see Camilla.

His cab had just pulled up at Mrs. Lancing's door when it was opened, and

the two children passed out, with Caroline Graniger in attendance.

"Mrs. Lancing is at home," Caroline said stiffly, "but not very well."

Betty gave him all sorts of injunctions.

"Don't make too much noise," she said. "You mustn't jump about, or scream on the stairs. Baby *always* screams when mummy's got a bad head."

"I really don't think I ought to go in," Haverford said hurriedly.

But Caroline had unlocked the door with a latch-key.

"I think Mrs. Lancing would like to see you," she said. She did not feel quite at her ease with him. "Shall I go up and tell her you are here?"

As she passed up the stairs, Caroline said to herself:

"He did not say anything disagreeable, and he did not look very cross. I am rather glad."

Mrs. Lancing was sitting in front of the fire, leaning back in a chair; a book lay open upon her knees. It was the day following the midnight raid on the nursery.

She looked very ill, and was languid and utterly unlike herself.

She looked round now with a start as the door opened and Caroline reappeared.

"I hear the children speaking to some one," she said, in a nervous sort of way. "Who is it? Why have you left them? After all, I don't think I will let them go out, Caroline."

"Mr. Haverford is down-stairs. I told him you were not well. I think he would like to see you."

Camilla leaned forward suddenly. The book slipped from her knees and fell to the floor. She had turned suddenly very hot, and her face was scarlet for the moment.

"No," she said in a jerky sort of way; and then, just as quickly, she changed her mind. "Yes, yes, I *will* see him! He may cheer me up. I feel half dead this afternoon. I am sure I must look an object, don't I?" She stood up for an instant and peered at herself in the glass over the fireplace.

She found the children back on the door-step; they parted with Rupert Haverford with reluctance.

"Do you know that it is years since I saw you?" was Camilla's greeting. "Where *have* you been? I begin to think there is something mysterious about these journeys to the north."

It was an attempt at her usual pretty, light-hearted manner, but only an attempt.

Haverford did not pull up the chair; he stood by the fire and looked down at her. Strangely enough, he felt quite at his ease with her to-day.

"Do sit down," she said suddenly; and there was a little nervous tone in her voice.

Instead of obeying, he put a question to her.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" he asked.

She pretended to misunderstand him.

"I told Caroline I was sure I was not fit to be seen to-day;" then she shrugged her shoulders. "Late hours, my dear friend. The result of all the silly, stupid things that I know you want to denounce from the housetop. I came home very late last night," she said, after a little pause. "I played cards, and I lost a lot! And then I found some tiresome letters waiting for me, and so"—she shrugged her shoulders a second time—"I had a bad night, and to-day, of course, I look a wreck."

"I think you ought to see a doctor," said Rupert Haverford.

Camilla moved impatiently in her chair.

"How unoriginal a man is! You are all alike," she said. "You imagine that as soon as a doctor has scribbled something on a paper, and the chemist has sent in a neat little white packet and an equally neat little bill, then everything must be all right! Shakespeare was a man, but he knew things better than most of you do. He knew, for instance, that all the doctors in the world cannot do any good when the mind is ill."

There was a pause, in which Camilla made a strange discovery. She found she could hear her own heart beat quite plainly.

Was it chance or Providence that had sent this man to her now?

"The other day," said Rupert Haverford, in his quiet, seemingly unemotional way, "you came to me to ask me to help a friend of yours. You know my only reason for existence just now is that I may be of some service to other people. I cannot help feeling that, perhaps, I might be of some use to you. If you won't try a doctor, suppose you try me?"

"Suppose we talk about something else," said Camilla. "I know I have something to say to you—what is it?" She wrinkled her brows and closed her eyes, and he looked at her almost hungrily.

Lying back with her eyes closed, it seemed to him that her face had grown more delicate, that her general aspect was more fragile.

The very suggestion that she should be really in trouble, that care should be fretting her, was torture to him.

"Ah, I know what it was," she said, opening her eyes and bending forward. "I have a bone to pick with you. I hear that you are not pleased because Miss Graniger accepted the situation I offered her. I call that horrid of you."

"I suppose I have no right to feel anything about the matter, one way or another," Rupert answered; "but, in reality, I did feel a little annoyed. I was not sure that it would be a good arrangement for either of you. You see, I know practically nothing about this girl."

"And you know too much about me," finished Camilla, with a little laugh. "Well, as it happens, it is the happiest thing for both of us. You can see for yourself that the children have turned to Caroline just as little ducklings turn to water; and as for myself, except for Agnes Brenton, I think this girl is the nearest approach to what I call a *real* woman I have ever met; so I hope"—with a flash of her old manner—"you are not going to interfere, exert your rights as a guardian or a parochial officer, or whatever you are, and take Caroline away."

He only smiled. The question of

Caroline Graniger was of no interest to him.

As he remained silent Camilla felt her heartbeats sound again with heavy thuds in her ears.

"Do sit down," she said to him, almost weakly; "you—you look so big, so commanding, as you stand there. I assure you I am not well enough to be awed to-day." He pulled up a chair and seated himself.

"It is very nice of you to come and see me," she said. "When did you get back?"

"I arrived just before lunch," he said.

"So you have only been back an hour or two, and you came to see me on once. Now that was very sweet of you, Mr. Haverford. Some instinct must have told you that I was dull and lonely, and dying for a pleasant companion."

Haverford's brown face colored a little.

"And now," he said, after a pause, "won't you tell me your trouble?"

She winced and caught her breath, and then, with a sudden irresponsible movement, she put her hands to her face, and he saw that she was crying.

His own hands moved convulsively for a moment, but before he could speak Camilla was speaking herself.

"Don't think me quite a fool," she said; "and don't, *please* don't, run away with the idea that I want to cry. I must be very strong now. I never want to cry—tears are useless at all times, but they are worse than useless now. I believe," she said, as she dried her eyes hurriedly, "that it won't surprise you in the least to be told that I have always been more or less in difficulty. Of course it is money—hateful, horrible money."

She got up and moved away from him, still drying her eyes.

"I dare say lots of people have told you all there is to know about me, and so you may have heard that the only money I have in the world to live upon has come to me from my husband's people. Well, then, you will understand a little bit why I am so upset to-day when I tell you that Colonel Lancing—that

is, the children's grandfather—is so angry with me that he has stopped my money, and—and——” she broke off here, and put her hands against her trembling lips. “He thinks to force my hand, you see,” she said hoarsely; “he knows I have nothing, that there is no one to give me anything but himself; he knows that if I am content to starve myself, I cannot let the children starve, and that is why he says the children are to belong to him. Of course he cannot take them from me by law. I am their mother, they are mine—*mine!* But if he cuts off the money, that gives him law!”

She sat down on a couch the other side of the room and dabbed her eyes with her wet handkerchief; and Rupert Haverford looked across at her with eyes that were wet, too.

The silence that was so natural to him, and so irritating to Camilla, became oppressive now. She got up with a jerk.

“You *would* make me tell you what the matter was with me, and now I have bored you,” she said. “Other people's troubles *are* bores, say what one will!”

And then he found his voice.

“Oh, don't let us play with realities,” he said. “I could not speak at first because—well, because I am not good at words. You must have realized that by this time; and you must have realized something else, Camilla, and that is that everything that concerns you is dear to me; so dear that I tremble at the thought that I am still outside your life.” He left the fire and went nearer to her. “I came here to-day,” he said, “because I found that I could not go through another twenty-four hours without seeing you. You mean so much to me. I had no idea whether you would care for me to come; indeed, the last time I saw you I tormented myself by imagining that you found me tedious and dull, that you wanted to have no more to do with me. Still, I had to come.”

Camilla gave a sharp sigh and turned round; her face was blurred with tears; she hardly looked young or pretty.

“I know what you are going to say,”

she said; “I know what you are going to ask me, but I am afraid to listen.”

“Afraid?” he said; and his brows met. “Afraid of what?”

“Oh, you don't know me,” said Camilla, with a broken sound in her voice. “You think me pretty, you like me, perhaps I fascinate you, but you don't know me. I—I am not going to refuse to be your wife,” she said—she spoke with her teeth half closed—“but I don't want any false pretenses; I don't want you to imagine things about me that do not exist. I am full of faults; I am not a bit good. You don't know”—she opened her eyes for a minute, and looked at him—“you don't know how un-good I am, and you—you are so good!” Her lips quivered. “The children!” she said brokenly; and then she was lying with her face pressed down on his breast, and his arms were folded about her.

What he said she hardly heard; she was only conscious in that moment of a great, a wonderful relief. It was as though some gnawing pain that had fretted into her very soul had been lulled; that a beautiful rest had followed on the pain.

CHAPTER X.

On the following day the children and their governess went down to Yelverton. There was so much excitement and bustle in getting away that Caroline had little time to realize that she was tired. She saw nothing of Mrs. Lancing, who was in her room.

There were no guests when they arrived, though plenty were expected for Christmas.

The mere thought of having her house full, and of arranging all sorts of treats for the children, made Mrs. Brenton quite happy.

“I am going to keep you tremendously busy,” she said to Caroline; “we must furbish up this old house. This is the first year that Camilla has let me have the children with me for Christmas. But I intend to make a bargain with her now. I shall insist that she send them here as much as possible.

I know Rupert Haverford will join forces with me in this. I suppose they will be married very soon."

Caroline looked so surprised that Mrs. Brenton laughed.

"Do you mean to tell me you have not heard the great news? It is known now to everybody," she said; "therefore I am not betraying confidences. I am so delighted about it, for I confess I have been hoping for this for a long time past. You know how dear Camilla is to me, and I like him immensely. Don't you?" Mrs. Brenton laughed again. "Oh, I forgot you don't know him! It is funny that you never came across him when you were with his mother!"

"He used to go very seldom to see Mrs. Baynhurst," Caroline answered. She spoke slowly, as if her thoughts were occupied.

Caroline was sharply startled at the news.

Agnes Brenton rejoiced frankly over the enormous material satisfaction this engagement signified, and Caroline joined with her in this; but she was unlike Mrs. Brenton in one respect, for whereas the older woman saw nothing but a certainty of happiness in this marriage, Caroline, young, unworldly, as she was, felt from the very first that there was in this prospective union a doubtful element; that difficulties would most certainly present themselves—great difficulties, every whit as great, as black, and as heart-shadowing as any that had belonged to Camilla in the past.

That spell of definite heart anguish, witnessed and shared by herself, charged all memory now of the children's mother with pathos. She could not help associating it with what had occurred.

Knowing nothing definitely, Caroline yet knew enough to assure herself that the engagement had been forced into existence by that very mental maelstrom of only a few hours before. And already she felt she understood Camilla well enough to be sure that this act, born of expediency, the outcome of intense excitement, would have its aftermath of judgment, perhaps of condemnation.

On Christmas eve Mrs. Brenton handed over the completion of the decorations to Caroline. People were arriving all day.

Toward the afternoon Betty fell into a state of great consternation. They had run out of gold and silver paper, and there was any amount of other little things that had been forgotten.

Caroline rose to the occasion and offered to go to the town for the paper.

Mrs. Brenton fell in quickly with the arrangement, only suggesting that Caroline should drive; but the walk did not frighten the girl.

Indeed, a sense of gladness radiated her as she progressed briskly along the muddy road.

Cheerless and yet gray as the country was in its wintry aspect, it had always a charm and a beauty for Caroline.

The afternoon light was beginning to fade as she left the town; she was laden with parcels, her arms were quite full.

She had just passed into the long road that led to Yelverton when a cab overtook her. It was an open fly, and a man sat in it alone, with some luggage piled in front of him.

Caroline just glanced round, and then, to her surprise, she recognized Rupert Haverford, who quickly stopped the cab as he in his turn recognized her.

"Give me some of those things," he said, and he began to unload her arms. "This looks like Christmas." Then he said: "You will let me give you a lift?"

Caroline hesitated a moment, and then said: "Thank you."

As he sat beside her in the cab, Rupert Haverford put a question to her rather eagerly.

"Do you know what train Mrs. Lancing came by?"

"Mrs. Lancing? She had not arrived when I left," Caroline answered. "I think she was expected just before dinner. At least, I heard Mrs. Brenton arranging that the carriage should go to meet the quick train down from

London. I believe she expected that you would come together."

"It was arranged we were to come together," said Haverford. But that was all he said; he began immediately to talk about Caroline herself.

"No doubt you will have been expecting to hear from me, Miss Graniger?"

Caroline said "No," in a quiet way.

He looked at her.

"Surely yes. You must have expected to hear from me?"

"Well," said Caroline frankly, "I thought it possible that you might forget to write, or that you were so annoyed with me you might not care to bother about me any more."

"I was not annoyed with you," said Haverford quickly.

"Oh! weren't you? I thought you were!"

They drove on for a little while in silence, and then Haverford said to her:

"Although you pretend that you did not expect me to write, I suppose you will be a little interested in hearing that I have some odds and ends of intelligence to give you about yourself. I should have written to you days ago," he went on quickly, "but my mother is rather a difficult person to handle, as you know, and it was only yesterday that I managed to corner her on this subject. She knew what was coming, and shirked me accordingly."

Caroline said nothing. She waited for him to continue. Nevertheless, her heart began to beat a little nervously.

"It is quite true," Haverford said, after that little pause, "my mother is your guardian, or, rather, was, for in future I intend to relieve her of that office. You are her niece by marriage. Your mother was Gerald Baynhurst's only sister. I hope to get you more details," Haverford said when he spoke again. "As a matter of fact, I have brought down with me a quantity of old letters and other papers which I dare say will throw some light on your early history. You seem to have been quite a baby when your mother died, and you came to England when you were a little child between three and four." They lapsed

into silence, but just before they rolled up to the big door she turned to him.

"I want to ask you something. Please let me know that you are no longer vexed with me for having agreed to stay with Mrs. Lancing. I believe I am going to answer very well, and you can't think how glad I am to be with the children. I do see now," Caroline said quickly, "that I ought to have referred the matter to you, but the circumstances were against me. It seemed such a wonderful chance for me to find work in such a moment."

"Of course I am not angry," Haverford said.

He helped her to alight, and carried all her parcels into the house, and as Mrs. Brenton came forward to greet him Caroline ran quickly up-stairs to her own room.

She was conscious of a great desire to be alone for a few moments.

As she put down her packages in a heap on the table she found she had carried up with her a large brown glove. It was warm still with the imprint of the man's strong hand; he had drawn it off to pay the driver, and it must have fallen among her parcels.

Caroline picked it up and stood a little while holding it; she derived, quite unconsciously, a definite sense of pleasure from the touch of this glove; it recalled the owner so clearly.

"I am so glad he did not forget," she said to herself; "it is so nice to be remembered."

CHAPTER XI.

Caroline did not go down to dinner that night. When bedtime came Baby was restless and seemed inclined to cough. Caroline was anxious.

Mrs. Brenton came up-stairs, however, and reassured the girl. She administered homely remedies, and prophesied that all would be well in the morning.

Then she tried to persuade Miss Graniger to go down, but she failed.

"Well, do as you like, my dear," Mrs. Brenton said; then she added: "I am so glad you had a lift home this after-

noon. Now my party is all complete, except for Camilla. I am very vexed with her."

Caroline looked at her quickly.

"Why?"

"Well, she ought to have come down this evening as she promised," Agnes Brenton answered impatiently; "she arranged to meet Rupert at a certain time, kept him waiting about for an hour and a half at the station, and then, when he supposed she had come on here by some mistake, he follows her, only to find a telegram saying she has gone to Lea Abbey and will not be here till to-morrow, in time for luncheon. I cannot think what has induced her to go to the Bardolphs," Mrs. Brenton added irritably. "She says it is because Lady Pamela is ill, and sent for her; but to my certain knowledge Camilla and Pamela Bardolph have not been seeing one another for months past."

Caroline followed Mrs. Brenton out onto the landing. She felt subdued, even saddened, as she listened. Mrs. Brenton paused.

"Mr. Haverford has brought down a number of things for the children. I hope they will learn to grow very fond of him," said Agnes Brenton earnestly. "Do you know that he has made them two little rich people? He has settled quite a fortune on Camilla and her children. Nothing can touch this money; it is hers and theirs, whatever may happen. He has asked me to be one of the trustees for the children."

Once again Mrs. Brenton turned back as she was going, and kissed Caroline.

"For all reasons," she said, "I deeply regret that Camilla has not come to us to-night."

On the morrow, when every one was at church, except Caroline and Baby, who certainly was not quite her usual brisk little self, Mrs. Lancing arrived.

She went up at once to the nursery, flung off her furs, and sat down and took Baby in her arms.

With the child nestling there, she leaned back and closed her eyes.

"I've got a most awful headache," she said wearily. "We were up till any hour this morning. Have you some

strong smelling-salts, Caroline? Chris Bardolph brought me over here in the motor." She sniffed the salts, and lay back with closed eyes for awhile. "Where is everybody?" she asked at last languidly; and she smiled when she heard that the whole party had migrated to church.

"Has he gone?" she asked, and then she answered the question herself: "But of course. I am sure he must sing hymns most beautifully."

"I don't think Mr. Haverford went with the others," Caroline said; "he said he would take Betty and the maid who has gone with her to mass."

"But he is not a Catholic," Mrs. Lancing observed quickly; "there is another duty for me! I shall have to try and make a convert of him. Oh, dear, my head! It feels as if it would come in two! Baby, darling, mummy must go down and rest in her own room."

But Baby clung to her mother, refusing to be separated, and, of course, got her way.

Left to herself, Caroline Graniger stood and looked out of the window thoughtfully. A shadow had gathered on her face.

She felt both pained and irritated, and found herself hoping almost eagerly that Mrs. Lancing would not speak of Rupert Haverford to others in that slighting, half-mocking manner.

From where she stood she could see right down almost to the entrance gates, for the trees were leafless, and the window where she stood was set high.

Rupert Haverford was walking up the broad drive briskly, and Betty was dancing beside him.

Of course Betty went straight to her mother's room on entering the house, and after awhile Miss Graniger went down to fetch both children.

She found Mrs. Lancing on the sofa, with one little daughter crouched up beside her, and the other engaged in softly rubbing her brows.

In a few moments Mrs. Brenton's voice was heard outside, asking if she could come in.

Camilla flashed a look at Caroline and gave a little laugh.

"Now for my scolding," she said in a low voice.

But Mrs. Brenton did not scold. She greeted Camilla most gently and affectionately, and was greatly concerned to hear about the bad headache.

The mere fact, however, that she ignored all mention of the truant act of the night before stung Camilla into a little show of bad temper.

"Don't, for goodness' sake, follow Rupert's lead," she said, "and adopt a martyrlike expression. I know perfectly well, Agnes, that you were furious with me because I did not turn up last night, now, weren't you?"

"I was not furious exactly," said Mrs. Brenton, "but disappointed, and rather surprised."

"I couldn't help it," said Camilla, in the same impatient way; and then the color flooded her face, and her eyes lit up for an instant as she smiled.

"Don't grudge me my few remaining holidays; I shall not have too many in the future. Yes, darlings"—this to Betty—"you must go. Caroline wants to make you ready for lunch. Of course you shall sit next me at luncheon. What an idea! Where else would you sit? I shall have one of you on each side of me."

Mrs. Brenton was speaking as the children were going out of the room with Caroline.

"So it was an excuse," Caroline heard her say, in a strained voice; "and Pamela Bardolph is not ill?"

"An excuse, of course," Mrs. Lancing answered, with a laugh. "I knew they were going to have a really lovely time, and when Pamela pressed me to go just for one night, I really could not resist the temptation. We had such fun, Agnes, and finished up with—"

Caroline hurried the children out of the room. She always dreaded what Betty would repeat. The child was very sharp, and her memory was extremely retentive.

At lunch-time Caroline found herself seated next to Haverford. Betty was on his other side.

When the plum pudding, all afire, was brought in with cheers, and every

one stood up to sing "Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot," Caroline broke down for a moment. But only Haverford knew this. Almost at once she had conquered herself, and as he asked her to clink glasses with him she smiled. Her face moved him sharply; it was quivering with emotion; her eyes were most beautiful.

She had lost her white, careworn look, and though she was still thin, there was a pinkish glow in her skin; no one would have called her plain in this moment.

"Suppose you change places with me," he said; "Betty wants to have you near her."

They effected the change quite quietly, and with the need of looking after the child, that oppression of emotion slipped gradually away from the girl's heart.

Mrs. Lancing ate nothing, but she did her best to be bright; that she was suffering all the time was, however, clear to both Caroline and Haverford.

It was a long time before she could escape from the festivities, but when everybody had trooped to the Christmas tree, she managed to slip away, and she drew Caroline aside with her.

"Come and help me," she said. "This is one of Dennis' rare holidays, and I don't believe I can get up-stairs by myself."

Caroline made up the fire, and then sat down in an armchair beside it, just as she had sat on another memorable occasion. She looked ever and again at Mrs. Lancing, who had crouched on the sofa, both her hands pressed to her head.

In a little while the tension seemed to relax, and Camilla opened her eyes.

"Rupert says it is my duty to let you leave me if you want to go," said Camilla, after another little pause.

Caroline looked at her with a little start.

"Why should I want to leave you?"

"Well"—it was a very weak little laugh that Camilla gave—"of course, now that you are an independent young person, you may not care to stop." Her brows came together again sharply for

a minute, and she held her hand pressed tightly to her eyes. "Fancy that odious mother of his cheating you out of your money all this time," she said feebly when she spoke.

Caroline felt hot, and yet there was a blank sensation about her at the same time.

"Money?" she said.

"Oh, hasn't he told you?—How like him! I suppose it will be a month before he will let you know everything."

"I think Mr. Haverford meant to speak to me this afternoon," Caroline said very hurriedly, "but we have had no chance as yet of any private conversation. He did tell me that I was right in supposing that I had a claim upon Mrs. Baynhurst, and he told me also a little about my mother, but that was all."

"Well, there doesn't seem very much to tell," said Mrs. Lancing, after a pause, "except that you have a certain small income of your own, which his mother, it appears, has kept entirely for herself all these years. I don't know that I ought to say very much about that sort of thing," said Camilla, with her half-bitter laugh. "I am not so wonderfully straight and honest myself, and I hate throwing stones at anybody else. Still, I don't know that I should defraud a child, and that is what Mrs. Baynhurst did, and would have continued doing if she had not been in a bad temper one day and turned you out of her house."

Caroline sat with her hands locked round one of her knees.

"I expect she did it because of Cuthbert," she said.

This remark seemed to rouse Mrs. Lancing.

"Oh, by the way, he is staying with the Bardolphs," she said; "it is the first time I have met him. You know he is a very handsome fellow, Caroline, and how clever! He sings enchantingly. Pam Bardolph is raving about him. He is painting her portrait. Did you ever know two men more unlike than he and Rupert?"

"Yes, they are very unlike," said Caroline.

Mrs. Lancing lay still a minute or two, and then she opened her eyes again and smiled at Caroline.

There was no light in the room, except the strong glow from the flames which shot up the chimney. From below they could hear the murmur of voices, and sometimes the excited laughter of the children.

"But you won't leave me just yet, will you?"

"I am afraid you will have to turn me out when you want to get rid of me," said Caroline. A moment later, in a low and moved voice, she said: "Do you imagine it would be so easy for me to separate myself from you and the children?"

The woman on the couch stretched out her hand, and Caroline stooped forward and took it in hers.

"I should like to think that you would stick to me, that you would never turn against me," she said, and her lips quivered.

Caroline's only answer was to tighten her hold on that slender hand.

Later on, as she was returning to her room, she met Haverford.

"If you see Camilla," he said, "will you say that I entreat her not to come down unless she is much better? I understand she sat up nearly all night with Lady Pamela, and she is not strong enough to do that sort of thing. She wants nursing herself."

Caroline frowned sharply and made no reply. It was long before the girl's composure returned to her.

As she sat in front of the fire, she took herself to task a second time that day.

"This should be nothing to me; it *can* be nothing," she said. But she knew they were empty words, even as she whispered them to herself. Where these two people were concerned, she had passed far beyond the range of indifference.

CHAPTER XII.

With the new year the damp, wet weather set in again, and it was generally conceded that it was much better

that the children should be kept in the country.

"That is such a little, poky house in town," Agnes Brenton declared.

Nevertheless, Camilla clung to the poky little house, although Haverford urged her all the time to fix a definite date for their marriage.

"Why should we wait?" he asked very reasonably. "We have really no one to consult or consider. I am just longing for you to come into my great, empty house and turn it into a home."

But Camilla always pleaded for time.

"Surely, dear Rupert, we should be much wiser to wait another month or two. I—I am not really well enough to go abroad just yet. After Easter it will be delightful." She gave a quick sigh. "And then I am making up my mind to be separated from the children," she said, "and, as Sammy Broxbourne would put it, 'it takes a little doing!' Oh, by the way, did I tell you that I had quite a charming letter from Sir Samuel, congratulating me on my engagement to you? Poor fellow, he has had an accident at Monte Carlo, and has injured his leg. He tells me he will not be able to walk for another month or so, and cannot get back to England just yet."

"The longer he stays away the better for England," said Haverford; "he is a very objectionable man."

"Oh, I see," answered Camilla, almost impatiently. "Agnes has been prejudicing you."

But Haverford made no reply to this, and the subject was dropped.

This was but a specimen of the conversation which passed between them whenever they met. But, as a matter of fact, they saw very little of one another.

Camilla got into the habit of running away from town to stay with one friend or another; the greater part of her time, however, was spent at Yelverton.

When she said she was not well in these days she stated the actual truth.

Mrs. Brenton was a little anxious about her, and tried to coddle her, and make her take care of herself—a diffi-

cult operation. It was strange to see Camilla listless and bored. She could not be roused to take an interest in anything except what concerned the children.

Camilla herself would have loved to have explained to Mrs. Brenton that she sought refuge so often elsewhere in order to escape from meeting Haverford. But she curbed the desire.

"Poor Agnes, she shivers and turns cold when she hears me say this sort of thing. She is so afraid I am going to lose everything just as I have got it, and, oh, dear me, I wish I could lose him! But his unparalleled generosity"—there was a sneer in her thoughts—"prevents all chance of escape. If you let a man settle any amount of money on you and your children, you cannot back out and tell him that you are going to keep the money and say 'good-by' to him."

On one occasion Mrs. Brenton spoke for the first time on the subject of the Lancing people.

"You have never told me what they said about your engagement."

Camilla yawned a little.

"The old man cursed me, I suppose, but he had the decency to keep the curses off paper. You know Rupert wanted to go down and interview Colonel Lancing, but I stopped that and made him write instead. I am not sure that it would not have been a good thing for him if he had gone; he would have heard some nice home-truths about me, wouldn't he? It would have been a kind of preparation for what is to come."

Agnes Brenton had taught herself already not to encourage this kind of conversation. Like Rupert Haverford, she was very anxious indeed for the marriage to take place, but she did not urge it openly, as he did.

That same day, after Camilla had been chattering with Mrs. Brenton, she climbed slowly up the stairs to the children's floor, but she found it empty.

As she passed through the night nursery she paused in front of the portrait of Betty's father.

"What is there about Cuthbert Bayn-

hurst that reminds me of Ned?" she said to herself. "The resemblance between them is very marked. Sometimes when Cuthbert is talking I could almost imagine Ned was in the room."

She put the portrait down abruptly, and, biting her lip, she went through to the sitting-room again.

She stood a little while at the window of the sitting-room, and then roused herself.

"A walk will do me good," she said; "I will go and meet them." She put on her furs, and went slowly downstairs.

As she passed into the damp and rather dismal grounds, Camilla's thoughts turned as usual to the coming future. The nearer the time approached, the more she longed to postpone the marriage.

"Surely I ought to be able to invent something to give me a little more time," she said to herself. "The worst is, he has no idea of the truth. Of course he knows I don't love him in the way he cares for me, but I am sure he thinks I do care for him. I suppose I could never let anybody understand, even myself, how I feel about him, how strangely I am drawn to him at one moment and how I almost hate him the next."

The butler had told her that he thought she would find the children on the road to the village.

And she moved in that direction. Her fretting, troubled mood broke and vanished as Betty's lithe, small figure came running round a corner of the road, and a cry of real joy hailed her.

It was the height of bliss to Betty and Baby to have their mother with them for a walk.

Camilla slipped her arm through Caroline's as the girl and Baby joined her.

"I missed you," she said; "I didn't know you were out." Then a little abruptly she added: "I think I shall have you back to town with me when I go this week. I have had the nurseries done up, and the children have been here so long, really I feel ashamed of trespassing too much on Agnes' hospitality."

"There's a man coming," suddenly

announced Betty; "he's been tumbling in the mud, and his horse is all lame. Oh, do look, mummy!"

They paused and looked backward. The picture Betty had described was very accurate.

Evidently the man, who was advancing rather slowly, limping a little as he moved, had come a cropper. He was splashed with mud from head to foot. Betty gave an exclamation.

"Why, mummy," she said, "it's Sammy!"

Caroline felt Mrs. Lancing start violently and press closer to her, as if unconsciously seeking protection. Instantly, however, she rallied herself.

Betty ran forward, of course, to greet Sir Samuel; and her mother, loosing her hand from Caroline's arm, followed the child.

"No need to ask you where you come from," she said half gaily. She held out her hand to Broxbourne, but he shook his head, and showed his own mud-stained one by way of explanation.

He was not agreeable to look at. There was a grim, ugly expression on his face—the look of a man who knew how impotent anger was, and yet who could not help being angry.

"I hope you have not hurt yourself," Camilla said. "Where are you staying?"

They all moved on together slowly. He mentioned a house that had been taken for the hunting season by some friends of hers.

At this juncture Caroline and the children walked briskly on ahead.

"It is tea-time, you know," the girl explained. As a matter of fact, she was anxious to get away.

Sir Samuel had a trick of staring at any woman he thought worth looking at in a very embarrassing fashion, and Caroline was certainly pleasing to the eye.

The note of her appearance was simplicity itself beside the costly elegance of Mrs. Lancing, but she was slim, and straight, and fresh, and young, and with such a pair of eyes any woman must have been attractive.

"So you are rusticating," Brox-

bourne said, as he and Camilla were left to themselves; "not much in your line, is it? But I suppose now that you are going to settle down you have turned over a new leaf entirely. Is the lucky man down here?"

"No, he has gone to build a hospital, or buy up a whole county, as a thanksgiving for our approaching wedding," Camilla laughed. Then she added: "You wrote me a very nice letter, Sammy."

"Yes, didn't I? Too good by half."

Fate had played Camilla a nasty trick by bringing her face to face with this man just at this particular moment.

When he had been thrown, his first act on picking himself up had been to thrash his horse unmercifully. That had relieved him a little, but the poison of his anger had not worked off completely. He had always promised himself the pleasure of dealing very straightly with Mrs. Lancing. He was not likely to deny himself the satisfaction of doing this when he felt so much in need of a vent for his feelings; when, too, he knew that he had the situation in the hollow of his hand.

"Well, I must say you are a clever woman," he began. "Yes, by Jove! you are. I used to think in the old days, when Ned was on the scene, that you were a fool and a saint combined. I know a little bit better now."

Camilla's lips quivered. She turned to him. There was an unconscious entreaty in her voice.

"Dear Sammy," she said, "why are you so cross with me?"

But he only answered with another laugh.

"Yes, in the old days," he went on, "you played the part of the prude to perfection. Kept a fellow at arm's length, and pretended all sorts of things."

"Why go back to those old times?" asked Mrs. Lancing, in a very low voice.

"Because I choose to do so; because there is something that has to be settled between us, and you know that! I suppose you think I was taken in by the sweet way you treated me when we met down here in November. But it was

the other way about. I took you in, didn't I?"

Camilla's color had faded. She looked haggard.

"Please speak a little more plainly," she said.

And Broxbourne answered her:

"Not I. There is nothing to be gained by telling the truth to a woman, especially to a woman like you."

She caught her breath sharply, almost as if she had been struck. Her mind, trained to work with almost incredible swiftness, fathomed the significance of these words.

She put out her hand and gripped his arm.

"What has to be said must be said to me, and to me only." Then suddenly she broke down. "Oh, Sammy," she said, "I know. Don't you believe—I know I did you a great wrong. There is nothing to excuse it, except that you don't know what a corner I was in. What an awful temptation it was! It has all been so easy for you. You have never had to face hard times and black, killing difficulties. You can't be expected to understand what these things mean."

"Why didn't you ask me?" the man said surlily; and she answered in that same broken way:

"I—I could not. First of all, you had gone away, and then I was afraid."

She broke off abruptly; he looked at her sharply, and again he laughed.

"You thought I would want payment," he said. "Well, you're right there. I have a good business instinct. I always like to get full value for what I spend, or what is taken from me."

At this juncture they had reached the gates of Yelverton Park, and Sir Samuel caught sight of a gardener. He hailed the man, gave the horse into his charge, and burdened him with all sorts of commands to the head groom.

"I'll be round at the stables very shortly," he said.

Camilla had walked on, but he overtook her. Her white, drawn face seemed to give him a great deal of satisfaction.

"You don't offer to give me back the

money, but I suppose that is what is in your mind," he said.

His half-bantering tone stung her like the lash of a whip; she was silent only because she could not speak.

"Well, my dear, you may as well put that out of your mind once and for all; that little piece of paper which you doctored so carefully is not to be redeemed by money. I must say you have a rummy notion of morality! I wasn't good enough to come near you, yet you had no hesitation whatever about robbing me when the time came along."

An exclamation like a sob escaped Camilla. He laughed.

"It is an ugly way of putting it," he said; "but it is the only way, and I fancy that with his peculiarly straightforward views, his working-man's propensity for calling a spade a spade, Mr. Haverford will regard the matter in the same light."

The woman turned at this half passionately.

"You are not going to tell him! Oh, you cannot! You *shall* not!"

"It lies with you to decide whether I tell him or not. You must break with this man. I have a prior claim. I don't intend to let you marry him."

She stood still and looked at him with dilated eyes.

"Break my engagement? Impossible! *Impossible!*"

Her heart was throbbing in her breast, her lips were white.

"Nothing is impossible," answered the man; "after all, I am not treating you badly. If I did the right thing, I should go straight to Haverford. What do you think he'd say if he heard my pretty little story? How you begged a check out of me for a charity bazaar, and how, by chance having got hold of a blank check of mine, you filled it in for a nice, large sum, and signed my name to it as bold as brass?"

Camilla turned to him. The hard, dry look had gone from her eyes; they were dim with tears.

"Sammy," she said brokenly, "don't rub it in so hard. I know—I *know* how horrible this thing is! When you came back last November I nearly died

when I saw you. I prepared myself for everything, and when you were so friendly, when you said nothing, I began to hope, even to believe, you did not know. Why did you not speak then? Don't you see how much worse it is for me now?"

Sir Samuel smiled at her.

"Of course it is," he said, his cigarette between his teeth; "I know that. I tumbled to your little game with this man the very moment I came back, and I promised myself some fun. Worse for you! Well, do you want me to say 'I am sorry'?"

"I—I want you to be merciful," said Camilla in that same moved voice. "If Rupert must be told, I will tell him. Do you know why I have promised to marry him? It is for my children's sake. Ned's father suddenly stopped the money he had been giving me, and demanded the children. If I had not done this thing, made them, myself, independent, he would have taken them from me. It is the truth I am telling you, Sammy, the truth. The children are more to me than life!"

Broxbourne answered her coolly; he was unmoved by her broken voice and her stained face.

"I have only been back a day or two, but from what I can gather," he said easily, "I believe you are now a fairly wealthy woman. You've got the money, and he can't take that away from you—I don't suppose he would if he could—so all you've got to do is to slide out of things as quickly as you can. I'll give you a month to do it in," Broxbourne said magnanimously.

Camilla brushed her eyes with her pocket-handkerchief; she was utterly unable to answer him, and at that moment they heard the voice of Betty calling to them. The child was evidently running back to join them.

"Go on," said Camilla hoarsely; "go on and meet her. For God's sake, go! Don't let her come! I—I will follow."

"I'll take her along with me to the stables," Broxbourne said, and he limped onward with a smile as Camilla turned, and half wildly, half blindly, walked sharply away from the house.

CHAPTER XIII.

The year was speeding into spring. Easter had come and gone.

Down in the country, in the old-fashioned gardens that stretched at the back of Yelverton, the sun was busy bringing out the leaves, and even the blossoms, almost visibly.

The children had found a delightfully warm, sheltered spot, and here they sat with Caroline, basking in the sunshine.

Mrs. Lancing had gone back to town rather hurriedly just before Easter, and she had not taken the children with her.

Her plans had been changed. Instead of staying in London, she went to the south of England on a visit. From there she wrote announcing that she had felt impelled to postpone the marriage.

The children rejoiced openly when they found they were not going away from Yelverton.

Rupert Haverford came frequently down to see them all. His manner with Caroline always amused her. He seemed to regard it as a duty that he should put her through a sort of cross-examination.

"I wish you would understand," she said to him half impatiently, once, "that I really and truly want to be with the children. What should I do with myself if I went away from them?"

"You might travel. You might study. Your income is not a very large one, but, still, it would give you the opportunity of coming in contact with a lot of things about which you know nothing now."

Caroline laughed at this.

"Well, that is true. I am wofully ignorant," she said. "It is rather impertinent of me to call myself a governess, but I am studying all the time. Mr. Brenton is educating me. I shall be quite learned in a little while."

"I only feel that it is my duty to put before you certain possibilities," Haverford said.

And Caroline answered:

"I am very much obliged to you, but I prefer the certainty that I have to all the possibilities in the world."

On the whole, however, they were on the best of terms, though they never progressed to intimacy.

April was well advanced when the children's mother arrived unexpectedly at Yelverton.

She had traveled up from Devonshire without pausing for rest in town, and declared that she was perfectly well; but Agnes Brenton was shocked at her appearance—shocked, too, and pained, by the change in her manner.

That quiet, apathetic languor was gone; Camilla was all jerks and nerves. She seemed strung up to the highest pitch of excitement. She talked incessantly, and smoked nearly all the time. This was a new habit.

It appeared she had not come to stay at Yelverton. She was due at Lea Abbey.

"I want to leave Dennis here," she said to Mrs. Brenton. "She is seedy, poor soul, and I told her she had better take a holiday. I can manage without her for a day or two."

They strolled out of doors to join the children. Caroline was dreaming.

The coming of Camilla was like the falling of a curtain. The time for dreams was ended; the quiet garden seemed to quiver with another kind of life.

She spent the few hours she was at Yelverton with the children. A great weight seemed to have gathered about Caroline's heart. Once, as they paused to listen to a lark piping out its soul in the clear sky, and then watched it drop to earth, Camilla pinched the arm she held.

"Naughty Caroline!" she said. "You are not a bit glad to see me!"

Caroline's eyes filled with tears.

"I am not a bit glad to see you looking as you look now," she answered.

"How do I look?"

"Ill and miserable."

Camilla laughed.

"Ill and miserable, my dear child! Do you know what you are saying? I may be a bit seedy—I don't deny that—but how can I be miserable when I have everything in the world to make me happy?"

"I don't know why you should be. I only know you are," Caroline said, in her quiet way.

When she was getting into the carriage Mrs. Lancing drew the girl toward her.

"Don't let them forget me." Her voice had an odd, dry sound. "Don't let them suppose I am forgetting because they do not see me. Children can forget so easily." She pressed Caroline's hand. "It is funny," she said, in an unsteady way. "I never left them before without yearning to be back the moment they were out of sight; but I leave them with you, almost happily, you funny little crosspatch Caroline."

Caroline looked at her. Once again there were tears in her eyes.

"Come back soon," she said. "Come back and let us make you well. We all want you."

Their hands unclasped, the door was shut, and the carriage rolled away.

Caroline stood a minute or two and watched the carriage roll out of sight.

A curious longing possessed her in this moment to follow Camilla and urge her to come back to Yelverton. She could not quite understand the reason for this protracted separation.

"There seems to be something more, something new," she said to herself. By that she meant that there was something more than that lack of sympathy with the man she had promised to marry that was actuating Mrs. Lancing in all her movements now.

"What is the use of my being happy," Caroline asked herself suddenly, "if I cannot assure happiness to others—to these two in particular?" And half impatiently she asked herself: "Why is she so obstinate? Why cannot she stand alone, the farther she must be away from all that she needs? Surely she ought to trust him. I can't understand why she should doubt or hesitate for an instant."

That evening she was standing alone by the window, looking at the evening sky, when a maid came into the room softly.

"If you please, miss," she said, "would you come down-stairs and see

Mr. Haverford? He says he would like to speak to you."

Caroline whipped round from the window.

"Mr. Haverford! Please say I will be down directly."

As she went slowly down the broad staircase Caroline saw him. He was standing in front of the fire in the hall, warming his hands.

"Both Mr. and Mrs. Brenton are out—a rare occurrence," she said; "but it is a village festival."

She gave him her hand, and as he took it she colored very faintly.

"Yes, so I hear. I am rather glad to see you alone." His tone was terse. As Caroline moved forward to the fire he said: "I have come down to ask for news of Camilla. Can you give me any?"

The girl looked at him for an instant.

"She was here to-day," she said.

"Here? What time?"

"She came in the morning. I understand she had traveled straight through from Devonshire, only changing stations in town."

He caught his breath in a way that was very like a sigh, and sat down, half shutting his eyes.

"Then she wished to avoid me," he said. "Where has she gone?"

When Caroline told him, he just nodded his head and said:

"Yes." He paused a moment, and then he said: "I am very troubled about her, Caroline." Indeed, his voice sounded very heavy with trouble.

Caroline waited for him to go on.

"She seems to be slipping out of my hands," said Haverford. "Try as I will, I cannot satisfy her, or keep pace with her. Perhaps I am too exacting. I don't know. The last time we were together we quarreled rather badly."

Still Caroline said nothing.

There was nothing to say. It was a moment in which silence was more helpful than words.

"We quarreled about Cuthbert," the man said, rising and standing by the fireplace. "She has been sitting to him for her portrait. That I don't object to; but what I do object to most em-

phatically—what seems so wrong, so unmanly, on his part, so weak, so foolish, on hers—is the fact that he has been getting money out of her. I taxed him with it. He could not deny it. And when I brought the matter to her, and insisted on giving her back the money, she said very bitter things to me.”

He drew in his breath sharply; then, as if to himself, he said:

“What is there, who is there, that can help me to give this woman happiness? I hoped I was going to do it, but I have failed, failed right through!”

“How do you know that you have failed?” asked Caroline, speaking for the first time. “She is not an easy person to deal with, yet it is just her very elusiveness which gives her her hold on us. And I know one thing. I can affirm this, that if there is a creature on this earth whom she honestly respects and values, you are that person.”

“Respects!” said Haverford. The fireglow lit up his face, and she saw that he was smiling faintly. He was silent for a time, and then he said:

“I don’t regard the question of Cuthbert as a serious one, notwithstanding that she has taken this peculiar attitude, ranging herself with him against me. There are other points far more serious, unfortunately, which make the situation so difficult just now. I have repeatedly asked her not to go to Lea Abbey, yet, you see, she has gone there. And I have felt myself compelled to absolutely forbid her to have any sort of intercourse with Sir Samuel Broxbourne. To-day I learned quite by chance that he has been staying in Devonshire the greater part of the time she has been there. The man is her shadow.”

Caroline’s eyes flashed. “Why don’t you assert yourself? Why don’t you insist on getting married? She belongs to you. When once she is your wife, all this nonsense will end. You ought to go over now to Lea Abbey, and bring her back here. You ought to keep her here, and marry her down here. If you want a witness, I’ll be one.”

“I cannot do that to-night,” said

Haverford. “I have nothing with me, and I really must go back to town.”

She understood him. It was not the first time she had realized how supremely delicate was his attitude toward Camilla. To follow her now might be to suggest to Camilla a desire to know what she was doing; to demonstrate to others his right to do this.

For all this thought and tact Caroline gave him keenest appreciation; at the same time she felt in her impatient way that it was the moment for action.

“Really and truly I believe if you pull her up sharply, let her know you are tired of being played with, all will go well,” she continued. “She wants some one else to show her the way. That is your duty.”

She looked up at him; and Haverford smiled as he looked down at her.

“Practical little person,” he said; “you would have made a splendid man, Caroline.”

“I mean to be a working woman,” the girl answered, “and that can be just as good as being a man.”

Haverford did not answer her. He stood looking into the fire for a long time in silence.

At last he took her hand and pressed it warmly.

“I must be going now. Thank you so much,” he said. “You have cheered me up a great deal. A man is always a clumsy creature in this sort of thing, and I am quite sure that everything that is happening is my own fault. Good-by.”

“We shall meet soon,” said Caroline as steadily as she could. “I shall telegraph to Mrs. Lancing in the morning and tell her I find it necessary to take the children to town. I shall invent a great many things for her to do. I dare say she will find me very tiresome; but I must risk that.”

He laughed and released her hand, but he still paused.

“If I could only get her abroad,” he said, with a thrill of eagerness in his voice, “I should keep her there, and then send for you and the children. Doesn’t it sound delightful? Well! Good-by once more, and I think I shall

take your advice." He laughed almost cheerily. "If I could only manage to elope with Camilla without her knowledge or consent, how she would enjoy it."

Caroline clapped her hands.

"At last," she said, "you are beginning to see your road."

He would not let her go outside, nor would he let her summon the butler. He passed out and shut the door behind him, and for a moment Caroline leaned against the door, and shut her eyes while she fought down the wild tumult of passion and heart-suffering that rushed upon her.

Love to some natures is born as lightly, has as little value, as a thistledown floating on the wind; it has the sparkle of a new jewel, the passing radiance of a summer day, to fade with the setting sun, and to come again when another day is born. But with other natures love comes but once, and comes to stay; pain, sorrow, age, separation, even death itself, have no power to dispossess such a love of its dwelling-place in natures such as these.

And it was in this fashion that love had come by stealth, as it were, into the heart of Caroline Graniger.

CHAPTER XIV.

To sit and eat dinner alone in the large dining-room was beyond Caroline this evening. She went up-stairs and sat with her elbow on the table, her face shadowed by her hand, thinking of Rupert Haverford, of that deep, tender note in his voice when he had been speaking of Camilla. How he loved her! The one creature who had brought to him all that had been lacking in his life till now! How many years he must have hungered for such love. Surely, now that it had come, it would have its real value! Surely a love such as his could not be born only to be wasted!

Just then she heard some one moving in the other room, and, rising, she went softly to the door. It was the maid who usually waited on her.

"I have brought you a letter, miss.

It's just come. Sent over from Lea Abbey."

"Thank you," said Caroline.

She waited until the maid had gone out of the room, and then when she was alone she still waited.

It was very ridiculous of her, but she felt suddenly frightened.

"What is the matter with me?" asked Caroline of herself impatiently. "I am all upside down to-day!" And then she opened the letter.

It was written in pencil; written in haste.

I did intend not to have sent a word to any of you, but just as I am starting for London I feel I must scribble a message to you, dear Caroline. Ask Agnes to forgive me. The fact is, I cannot bring myself to write to her, and you—you little bit of a thing as you are, draw me as I have never been drawn before. I am taking a big step to-night, Caroline. It is ridiculous to suppose that you will any of you regard what I am doing as anything but madness, but I cannot help myself. Everything forces me away from what you all think the best for me; but then, you see, none of you have known just exactly what has been passing with me. I had a great temptation to open my heart to you when we were together to-day, but I could not do it. Remember what I told you about the children. They won't see me for some little while, but as soon as possible they will come to me, and you, too—if you *will* come. Tell Agnes I will write to her in a day or two, and that I am always hers lovingly; that is, if she cares any longer for my love.

The initials "C. L." were scribbled under this.

Caroline put down the letter and stood staring ahead of her, seeing nothing.

At first the full significance of what Camilla had written did not come to her. She was only conscious of that almost hopeless feeling of irrisistance, of surrender to emotion, which any acutely pathetic element produces.

But this dazed, only half-conscious sensation passed from her quickly, and then her mind began to act nervously, feverishly.

She took up the letter again, and she read it this time deliberately.

"She is gone to London," she said to herself; "that means that she will sleep there—that she will not leave till to-

morrow, wherever she is going. It has all been planned out. She got rid of Dennis because Dennis might have asked questions. Lea Abbey was only one of the details, and now she is in London. Well, I shall go there, too."

She ran down to the hall and sought and found a railway guide. All at once she remembered that a guest who had once been summoned away from Yelverton at night had caught a train at some junction a little distance away. By so doing he had reached London at a very early hour.

Caroline decided to follow his course. The express paused at Swaile Junction somewhere before four o'clock, but she would start off now.

To have to sit there and wait till the Brentons came back, and to go into explanations, was utterly beyond her. Besides, she felt half afraid that Mrs. Brenton might try to dissuade her from going, and Caroline could not endure that. It was not only the woman who called to her, it was the man who loved this woman—the man whom she loved herself—who seemed to clamor for her to stand between Camilla and what she intended to do.

She scribbled an explanation to Agnes Brenton, and slipped Camilla's letter inside. Then she started on her long walk to Swaile.

It was not a dark night, though there was no moon.

How far she walked Caroline never knew, but her feet were getting stiff and tired when at last she saw the lights of the junction in the distance. Nevertheless, she could not rest when she was in the station. She spent the time waiting for the train to come in restlessly pacing the platform.

It was about half-past six when she reached London, and put herself into a cab. The journey from the station seemed interminable, but at last she had alighted at the familiar little house.

Her heart was in her throat as she rang the bell.

"Perhaps I shall have to wait a little while," she said to herself. "They never get up very early."

But, strangely enough, the door was

opened to her almost immediately by the cook, whose face lit up when she saw Caroline.

"Oh, miss, I am glad to see you!" she said. "I've had such a start. He's up-stairs in the drawing-room. If you'll believe me, he's been here since a quarter to six. Wouldn't be said no! But how tired you look, miss! Come in and sit down."

Caroline could not get her voice for a moment. Vaguely she remarked a strapped portmanteau standing on one of the chairs. Then she asked:

"Mrs. Lancing, is she here?"

The servant shook her head.

"No, miss, she's not here. That's what I've been telling Sir Samuel. He won't believe me. He says she's coming."

"Not here?" said Caroline.

She stepped back, and rested against the hall wall. All her strength went from her for a moment, but she rallied herself quickly and turned into the dining-room.

"Who did you say was up-stairs?" she asked.

"Sir Samuel, miss. Come here at a quarter to six, as I told you. Said as the mistress had fixed him to come. Of course the missus isn't here; she ain't expected—leastways, not by us."

At that very moment they heard the stamp of a heavy foot, and the drawing-room door was opened.

Caroline got up, stood a moment with her eyes shut, then opened them with a jerk, and walked out of the room straight up the stairs. She took off her hat as she went. Sir Samuel Broxbourne was standing on the top stair; he frowned as he saw her. He was dressed as for traveling, in a rough tweed suit.

It was the girl who spoke first.

"What are you doing here?" she asked. "By what right do you come to the house at this time? Will you please be so good as to go at once?"

He stared at her, and, as she advanced, she moved mechanically to one side and let her pass, but he followed her into the drawing-room.

"I am here by appointment," he said

his tone was sullen, his manner rude. "Mrs. Lancing desires to see me."

"No person would give you an appointment for six o'clock in the morning," said Caroline.

"Ordinary people might not," he answered, with a smile that was a sneer, "but this is not an ordinary house. You think I'm lying when I tell you that I came here by appointment; but I tell you that she fixed the hour herself. If you don't believe me, here's her note."

He held out a crumpled piece of paper. Caroline put it on one side, but she could not help seeing the writing, and she knew it only too well.

"If Mrs. Lancing has told you to come here to meet her, then I can say no more."

At this moment the cook ran up the stairs with a letter.

"For Sir Samuel, miss," she said.

Broxbourne was just behind, and he snatched the letter out of the woman's hand.

"Won't you come down, miss?" said the servant, in a hurried way. "Do come. I've got some tea for you."

But Caroline looked backward at that moment. She had caught the sound of a muttered exclamation. She hardly knew what prompted her to send the woman away, but she did so, and she turned and went back into the drawing-room, shutting the door behind her.

Broxbourne was standing biting his mustache. His red face had turned white. He looked ugly and alarming.

"You have news from Mrs. Lancing?" Caroline said.

He looked at her, but made no answer.

The tension of her nerves gave. Caroline groped her way to a chair, sat down, and hid her face in her hands for an instant; then she looked up.

"I *entreat* you to tell me what has happened," she said brokenly. "I care for her so much. I came here because I care so much—because I thought I could help her."

Then Broxbourne spoke, and there was an indescribable amount of bitterness in his voice.

"Well, I tell you she isn't worth it.

She wouldn't care if you broke yourself up into little bits to help her. She——"

There was a hard, ugly word on his lips. He stifled it, but not easily; then he said: "Mrs. Lancing is married. In this note she informs me she was married yesterday morning early to Cuthbert Baynhurst."

Caroline cried out sharply:

"It isn't true! Oh, it isn't true!"

"I think you'll find it is," said Broxbourne shortly.

He avoided looking at Caroline. He was not oversensitive, but something about this girl made him uncomfortable.

"And if you want to know why she has done this, I am the person to tell you. She wanted to show me that she's a bit cleverer than I took her to be, and, by God! she's about done it! She's tricked me fairly; but if she thinks it ends at this, she'll live to know her mistake. I wish her joy of Mr. Baynhurst. They're a good match. After sponging all he knew on the other chap, he walks off with the woman and the money. Well, I'll take pretty good care the beautiful Camilla don't show her face here again very soon. She may trick me; but she isn't out of the wood for all that." He was getting excited now. "If I've held my tongue all this while, there's nothing to prevent my speakin' now. And I think it's on the cards that our dear friends may have their honeymoon excursion brought to an end a little sooner than they expect. Forgery is a nasty offense, Miss Granger. It means seven years."

Caroline looked at him with strained, incredulous, and miserable eyes.

"What do you mean?" she whispered.

"I mean that your dear friend Camilla is nothing better than a common thief; that she robbed me of nearly four hundred pounds a year and a half ago."

Caroline's lips turned white.

"I will not believe you," she said; but the man hardly heard her.

He was wound up; the whole venom of his wrath was let loose. Stamping to and fro, he laid bare the history of the last few weeks; coarsely, brutally, he told the truth, ending with the part

that had brought him to the house this morning.

Caroline's very soul went out in an agony of pity for the woman who had been tortured by this man. If only she had known! If only Camilla had turned for help to her!

Though she would have given her life to have denied his accusation, she knew it was true. So much was explained now—so much, so much!

As Broxbourne made a move as if to go, she commenced speaking indistinctly, half wildly:

"You have said a most terrible thing. You have accused this—my friend of a great crime, and you mean to have her punished. Why? Not for any honorable or upright reason, but because you are so angry with her that you are like a madman, and want to strike at her somehow, you don't care how. That seems to me to be very paltry. There must be something very wrong with you; even a schoolboy knows it is only a coward who hits a woman." She caught her breath. "I should not have taken you to be a coward, Sir Samuel."

He put his eye-glass into his eye, and looked at her again.

His anger began to subside. As he fixed Caroline with a steady gaze, he unconsciously settled his collar and fingered his tie.

"You're an odd sort of girl. Always thought you couldn't say 'Boo' to a goose, and here you are going at me as if you were made of fire."

Caroline laughed—such a tired, miserable laugh.

"You have never spoken to me before," she said.

"No, by Jove! but I've wanted to, many a time. I'm sure I've looked at you hard enough. First time I saw you, that night you threw my glove back at me—do you remember?—I took a fancy to you."

"Really!" said Caroline.

Her heart was quaking. She was horribly afraid of him, but this fear was as nothing compared to that withering, awful one of a few moments before. She moved away from the door, pulling it open as she went.

"Yes, really; but you know—every pretty woman knows her own power."

He made her change color; she was very interesting.

He was not sure that her head was not prettier than Camilla's; and her eyes were glorious.

"You're not only pretty, but you're a good sort, though you do call me a coward," he said jerkily. "I tell you what. I like grit, and you've got plenty of it. I'll shake hands with you, Miss Graniger."

He got up. Caroline seemed to grow suddenly very small.

"I—I cannot shake hands with you, Sir Samuel," she said, hoping her voice would not desert her altogether.

"Why?"

"Because I am afraid of you. You are very strong and fierce, and I think you can be cruel."

He laughed almost good-humoredly. "All granted; but I shan't hurt you. I give you my word I won't."

Caroline bit her lip.

"If you hurt Camilla, you will hurt me horribly."

He frowned sharply.

"That's another matter," he said.

"No, it is all one. I love her, I love her children." Caroline's voice broke.

"Don't cry," said Broxbourne, drawing a little nearer.

She shrank away from him, but not visibly. Her heart was beating in her throat.

The last remnant of anger had gone from his expression, his eyes were softer, his hands moved restlessly. Her white, quivering face had more significance to him than mere prettiness in this moment.

He approached her a step nearer, but an interruption came to this little scene at this moment. The cook once more made her appearance.

"Don't you think as you ought to have some breakfast, miss, and rest a bit? There'll be a message perhaps from Mrs. Lancing by and by."

Caroline picked up her hat and her gloves.

"Thank you, I will come," she said.

"Look here," said Broxbourne, fol-

lowing her quickly and scowling at the servant, "I'd like to say something more to you about this. When can I see you?"

She leaned against the doorway and rested with her eyes shut for half a moment, then she looked back at him.

"I am going back to Yelverton now, directly."

He paused a moment, and then he said in a dogged sort of way:

"Then I'll go to Yelverton, too. Now I'll take myself off."

As he passed her Caroline put out her hand and caught his arm feebly.

"Sir Samuel, you will not——" words failed her.

There was a pompous air about him as he answered that broken sentence.

"I will do nothing till I have seen you again. Will that please you?"

She could only bend her head. As he went heavily down the stairs her eyes closed again.

Like a blind, broken-down creature, she turned into the drawing-room once more, and as she fell into a chair she lay there inert, too prostrate to move or even to think consciously.

CHAPTER XV.

In June, when the gardens at Yelverton were glorious with roses—and Caroline's one task seemed to be hunting the children out of the strawberry beds—Cuthbert Baynhurst and his wife returned to town.

They did not do this voluntarily; it was literally to see his mother die that Cuthbert was summoned back to England.

Rupert Haverford himself wrote the message that brought his half-brother home.

He himself was on the eve of sailing for the United States when his mother's condition became so serious.

He had promised Mrs. Brenton to spend one night at Yelverton before leaving for America, but, of course, all his arrangements were upset.

Caroline was well again, but very restless in these days. After her nerv-

ous breakdown Mrs. Brenton endeavored to treat her as a kind of invalid, but she quickly abandoned this as a hopeless undertaking, and, indeed, the girl very quickly picked up her color and her strength. But she was changed; her calm, determined, practical mood was gone altogether.

There were times when Mrs. Brenton was puzzled by her manner, and nothing was more difficult for her to understand than the friendship which appeared to have sprung up between Caroline and Sir Samuel Broxbourne.

Sir Samuel was always turning up at Yelverton at unexpected moments.

In a vague sort of way this question of Broxbourne seemed to divide Caroline and Mrs. Brenton. The older woman resented, not unnaturally, the fact that the girl should not confide in her.

"Of course if he is in love, and he wants to marry her, it might be foolish to do anything to prevent it. But *docs* he want to marry her? And would she have him?" Here Mrs. Brenton had to shrug her shoulders hopelessly. "I should have thought he would have been the last man on earth to attract her."

And Caroline was perfectly well aware of what was passing in the other woman's mind. It was one of the many little prickly burdens which she carried in her heart in these days.

If it could have been possible to share this trouble with Agnes Brenton, she would have done it gladly; but she knew that Camilla's disloyalty had worked far deeper into the heart of this woman, who had loved her with the anxious love of a mother for so many years, than even Agnes Brenton herself realized.

Caroline was by no means sure that if she were to have laid before Mrs. Brenton the facts which Sir Samuel had disclosed to her that sad and strange morning, she would have received any suggestion of help. On the contrary, it seemed to her that Camilla's old friend might have been more definitely estranged, as assuredly she would have been made more miserable, were she to

have listened to that story of temptation and weakness and dishonor.

As for Caroline herself, the same spirit that had sent her out into the night, eagerly defiant of fatigue, loneliness, or any possible danger, merely to stand beside this helpless, lovable woman, animated her still. She could not shut out of her remembrance the pleading patheticness of Camilla's look the last time they had met, and though they were now parted by an irrevocable barrier, she remained still acutely sensitive to the spell exercised by that creature of wayward moods and tenderest influences.

When Mrs. Cuthbert Baynhurst reached London, she at once wired to Yelverton, announcing her arrival, and desiring that the children might be taken to town the following day to meet her.

To Caroline she sent a little, pleading note, in which she asked the girl to bring the children herself.

"She has at least the grace not to suggest coming here," said Mrs. Brenton, with a laugh that had the sound of tears in it.

Then she looked at Caroline.

"You will go?" she said in a low voice; and Caroline said:

"Yes."

The Cuthbert Baynhursts were installed naturally in one of the best suites of one of the largest and most sumptuous hotels.

It was so strange, so natural, and yet so unreal to see Camilla again!

She looked marvelously well; that fretted, excited, nervous air had gone entirely.

The presence of the children relieved the situation to a great extent, yet both Caroline and Cuthbert Baynhurst's wife felt the strain of this meeting sharply.

But when finally the children danced off to another room to find Dennis, and they were alone, Camilla turned and stretched out both her hands to the girl.

"Have I lost you, Caroline?" she said. "You look at me so strangely, your eyes hurt me. I have always clung to the

hope that you would never change, that you would always love me."

Caroline paused a moment, and then took the hands.

"Are you happy?" she asked in a low voice.

The look that flashed into the woman's face was a revelation to her.

"So happy!" she said. "Oh, Caroline, it is all the beginning over again, only better, truer, and, please God, more lasting! Caroline, I love him. Oh, I love him, and I never thought I should love any one again after Ned."

Caroline turned away; her lips quivered.

"Then we who care for you must be content," she said. There was a bitter and yet a sad note in her voice.

Cuthbert Baynhurst's wife stood and looked at her.

"Of course," she said, a little hardly, "I know you think I did a dreadful thing, and I will tell you one thing, Caroline, that I wish from the bottom of my heart that I could have come by this happiness in a different way. I don't want to excuse myself, for I have no excuse, but equally I don't want you or anybody else to make up things that don't exist. Don't, for instance, run away with the idea that Rupert is breaking his heart about me. He is much too prosaic, too stolid, too commonplace. You saw for yourself how calmly he took the whole thing. If he had been another sort of man—well," she laughed, "there might have been four inches of steel for Cuthbert, and perhaps a bullet through my brain."

Caroline turned and looked at her coldly.

"How can you speak so foolishly! What do you know of his heart? You have never understood him; even when you had the life of his life in your hands you sneered at him as poor and paltry. Make a mockery of him to others if you will, but not to those who know what sort of man he is. It is pitiful; it makes your wrong so much, much worse."

Camilla looked almost frightened. Her lip quivered, and tears gathered in her eyes.

"Oh, don't speak to me like that!" she said brokenly. "Do you think I don't know how good he is—how more than good? His generosity won't bear talking about; but you don't know all, Caroline. If you did, perhaps you would judge me more mercifully."

There was a little pause.

Caroline made no answer; she turned a little, and walked to one of the long windows. Camilla moved across to her.

"Caroline, darling," she said pleadingly. She put her hand on Caroline's shoulder, and as the girl still said nothing she gave her a little shake.

"You know you love me, and you shan't be angry with me, Caroline."

There was a mist in Caroline's eyes. She turned, but at that moment Dennis looked in at the door and called to her mistress.

"If you please, ma'am, I think you'd better come to Mr. Baynhurst. He's in the other room. I'm afraid something bad has happened."

Camilla stumbled in her haste to get out of the room, and almost immediately she was back again.

"I'm sorry," she said indistinctly, nervously; "but I think the children had better not stop. Cuthbert's mother is dead. She died an hour ago. Try not to let them be disappointed, Caroline. Tell them they shall see me very soon, perhaps to-morrow. It seems awfully unkind to send them away, poor little souls; but he is in a terrible state. I must be with him. It would be so miserable for the children here."

Indeed, the children seemed glad to go. They kissed their mother, who held them to her in a passionate, nervous kind of way, and then let Dennis put on their hats, and went away with Caroline, dancing as they went.

By the middle of the afternoon they were back at Yelverton.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was, of course, impossible for Haverford to leave London immediately after his mother's funeral. He had to charge himself with the arrangements

of her affairs, a matter in which his half-brother should have taken his share. But Cuthbert Baynhurst had hastened away as quickly as he could go.

He seemed to be haunted by the dread of infection if he set foot again in the house where his mother had suffered and died. He was not even present at the funeral.

At the time the coffin was being lowered into the ground, Camilla and he were traveling in hot haste away from London, from England, from the mere possibility of breathing the air the poor dead woman had breathed.

"This will be the beginning of the end," Caroline said to herself. "She will tire so soon, and his selfishness has no limits."

She was sitting out in the garden alone. There was a moon, and the world was wrapped about in the hush of the summer night.

The children were asleep. They had been in a great excitement all day because it had suddenly been decided that there was to be a departure from the country to the sea.

"A change will be good for all of us," Mrs. Brenton declared, with something of her old briskness. "You have never been to Normandy, have you, Caroline? Well, prepare yourself for a delightful experience!"

On the morrow the packing would commence; and Caroline smiled half faintly to herself as she conjured up the importance of this occasion to Betty and Baby.

Caroline leaned back in the chair and closed her eyes.

It was deliciously cool and quiet. This was the moment that she loved to be alone, when the gardens had greater beauty for her, and the healing tranquillity of the country spoke to her eloquently.

Caroline had not seen Haverford since that most memorable evening; it did not seem likely or probable that they should see him again before they went away.

"Did I tell you," Mrs. Brenton had said once to the girl, "he refused to take

back a single thing he had given her? She told me all this in the first letter she wrote from Italy, and yet even now," Mrs. Brenton added, in a low tone, "I don't believe she grasps the full meaning of his generosity. After telling me all this, she added that, of course, if it had been any other man than Cuthbert she could not have kept the jewels; but that as Cuthbert was his brother, he had a right to share in so much wealth."

"That was not her own suggestion," Caroline had said quickly.

Her thoughts hovered pityingly about Camilla this night, and about the memory of the woman who was just dead.

That year in his mother's house had taught her to know Cuthbert Baynhurst through and through.

His desertion now of his duty, his cowardice and exacting selfishness, were made doubly contemptible, when she remembered his mother's clinging love, her heart-whole devotion, her pride in him.

"He is not worthy to be walked on by Rupert," Caroline determined hotly. And at that very moment some one spoke her name; and, starting violently, she turned to find Rupert himself standing just behind her chair.

"Do forgive me," he said quickly, realizing how much he had startled her. "Mrs. Brenton sent me to find you. She told me you are always out here at this time."

"I fancied I was quite alone," said Caroline nervously; then she added: "Have you been here long? Did you motor down?"

He said: "Yes."

Their hands had clasped and unclasped.

"I felt I must come down and see you all before you fly away. In particular, I want to speak to you."

"Yes," said Caroline.

"Are you tired?" Haverford asked rather abruptly. "Shall we walk?"

She got up at once.

"It is so delightful out here at this time. I will take you to Betty's garden. There is a rose waiting for you, Mr. Haverford. It was going to be sent by

post in a box to-morrow. I don't know that I dare pick it, but you may look at it."

When they reached Betty's garden he knelt down and put his lips to the rose.

"Tell her I have been here, that I have left a kiss for her. I won't pick it. Dear little creature, let her send it on, if she wants to."

"But are you going back to-night?" Caroline asked.

"I think so. I have a sort of fever in my bones. I want to be moving all the time." Then, quite abruptly, he turned and put his hand on her shoulder. "There is something else I want to say to you."

She trembled and drew back, and he at once removed his hand.

"Yes?"

"I am told that Broxbourne has been coming here very often of late; coming apparently for the purpose of seeing you."

"Who has told you this?" Caroline asked coldly.

"It has been told me by a friend, and from the very best of reasons."

"I know Mrs. Brenton is everything that is kind and good," said the girl, in a hard and cold tone; "yet I fail to see why she should approach you on such a matter as this."

"Do you?" said Haverford. "She does it because she knows that I have the right to know what is passing with you, the right to enter into all that is important in your life. I have established myself as your guardian, and by my mother's will you are bequeathed to my care, therefore I have a right to put questions to you which might seem impertinent if asked by anybody else."

"I think Mrs. Brenton makes a mistake," said Caroline, still walking on.

"In what way?"

"Sir Samuel is an old friend of the house—he has been in the habit of coming here freely, I understand; why, therefore, should it be supposed that he comes now only because of me?"

"I don't know why, but I hope to God he does not come for that reason!" His voice grew harder. "You know what I think of this man; I have spoken to

you freely about him, and, better than that, your own instinct, which has carried you to such rare judgments, must tell you that he is no fit associate for a girl. I was going to say, for any decent woman."

Caroline was silent for a long time. Suddenly she said:

"I don't suppose Sir Samuel is a paragon of perfection, but, at the same time, I don't think he is half so bad as he has been painted. At least he is very harmless, and rather amusing."

Rupert Haverford looked at her, and a great amazement, which bordered on pain, took possession of him.

"You like him?" he said, going to the point in his peculiarly direct way.

Caroline shrugged her shoulders.

"I really think I do, but I am not sure; at any rate, I don't bother myself about it very much." Her tone was flippant. "How you *do* love catechising!" she said. It might have been Camilla speaking.

"Well," Haverford said, in a cold, dry way, "if you regard him in this uncertain way it is easier for me to act."

Caroline looked round sharply. There was indignation in her tone.

"How do you mean—act?"

"I mean I shall take steps to prevent this acquaintance from becoming an intimate one. However much it may annoy you, the fact remains that I am your guardian, and that until you are twenty-one you are not free to do anything of which I do not approve, and I assuredly do *not* approve of your friendship with this man."

Caroline paused and caught her breath.

"This surveillance," she said coldly, "is not only very ridiculous; it is very objectionable. You may arrogate to yourself a certain authority where my money is concerned, but in the matter of choosing my friends I demand absolute liberty. Please understand I can recognize no law you make in this." She stood a few seconds, then she said: "Good night" abruptly, and walked away from him. Half-way across the lawn she broke into a run, and had

gained the house almost before he realized she was gone.

Rupert Haverford was extraordinarily disturbed. If he had not questioned her himself he would not have believed this thing. There had been something so fresh and clear to him about Caroline; she had matched himself in straightforwardness; her word had been charged with truth, and over and again she had given evidence of such unusual qualities that he had unconsciously endowed her with wisdom beyond her years, and regarded her mental outlook as peculiarly well-balanced. Not even the great overthrow of his life's sweetest task had moved him more sharply than he was moved now. Indeed, then he had been partially prepared. All things he had expected from Camilla except the thing she had done. And the astounding conviction of her disloyalty had been hardly more startling than this curious phase of her nature which Caroline had revealed this night.

He had placed Caroline apart; he realized now that he had thought of her as something fragrant and beautifying, and with her own lips she had confessed herself capable of a sympathy for a man who was brutal, vulgar, coarse in heart and mind.

Were all women so framed? Or was it merely his destiny to be denied knowledge of woman in her true personification? The woman of sweetest compassion and bravest comradeship; that figure of nobility and modesty of whom poets had sung from ages uncounted, and for whose purity and honor men had died in centuries gone.

Before he went indoors he made his way to Betty's little garden again. He stooped and touched the rose once more with his lips, but it seemed as if the fragrance had gone from the flower, as if the soft beauty of the garden had lost something. Certain it was that as he slowly moved under the trees he had a sense of loss heavily upon him, as if in the flitting away of that girl's white-robed figure, not merely the little world about him was robbed of a potent charm, but that there had gone with her

a sympathy, an influence, that all unconsciously had suggested to him consolation.

CHAPTER XVII.

The sea had gone out a long way, and between the tiny digue and the beach there stretched a large expanse of rich, wet sand, broken here and there by large, smooth pools, which reflected as in a mirror the wondrous opalescent coloring of the sky, made inexpressibly glorious by the sinking of the hot, tired sun.

At least Caroline felt that it ought to be tired, it had been shining so fiercely for so many hours.

She sat in a low canvas chair on the sands, and watched her two small people scampering here and there absolutely regardless of fatigue.

She was spellbound by the marvelous beauty of the sea and sky.

Somewhere over where the sea and the night sky met lay the land where he was. If only her spirit could wing itself through those thousands of miles and look upon him!

He seemed lost. It was not only distance that divided him.

Since that June night in the old garden there had been silence between them—a silence that was fraught with the most hurtful significance to Caroline.

"News from Camilla," said Mrs. Brenton, as the little cavalcade turned into the hotel gardens. "She is in Dieppe. We shall see her to-morrow. She writes in a great hurry, but seems in the best of spirits. It is useless," added Mrs. Brenton, with a faint smile, "to pretend that I can keep up a defensive attitude with Camilla. She writes for all the world as if she had never given me an hour's uneasiness in all her life."

Caroline dressed for dinner an hour later with a nervous feeling, that was almost apprehension, weighting her.

"Why has she come to Dieppe?" she asked herself. "Can she know that he is there? I wish I could be more sure of him. It is just because he never

speaks of her now that he makes me so anxious."

As luck would have it, that night when they went for their usual stroll after dinner Agnes Brenton introduced Broxbourne's name.

"I shall be sorry to go away from here," Mrs. Brenton said, with a sigh; and Caroline said:

"So shall I." A moment later she added: "I wish I knew what my future is going to be."

Mrs. Brenton looked at her.

"What do you mean, dear child?"

"I mean," said Caroline, "that everything before me is uncertain. Undoubtedly the children's mother will make an attempt to have them with her; but this cannot possibly be a lasting arrangement, because I know something about Cuthbert Baynhurst, and I can hardly picture him living in the same house, however large, with children. And," said Caroline, with a little catch in her voice, "assuredly in that house there would be no place for me."

Mrs. Brenton was silent a minute, and then she said:

"Camilla knows there is always room at Yelverton for the children, and I should be happy if I could hope that you would be with them for a long time to come. But this is unreasonable. So, too, is *our* desire to keep you with us. Indeed, I have been preparing myself to hear that you were thinking of having a home of your own." Then Agnes Brenton slipped her arms round the girl's shoulder. "I *must* know!" she said. "Caroline, are you going to marry Sammy?"

She was almost amazed by the emphatic way in which Caroline denied this.

"But he wants to marry you? That is patent to all the world. Is it so hard for you to speak to me, Caroline?"

"I know so well what you have had in your mind all this time," the girl answered. "I know you think it most extraordinary that I should encourage Sir Samuel, and I know that a lot of people would think it very wrong of me to seem to encourage him. He has asked me four times already if I will

marry him; and if he asked me four hundred times I should answer the same thing."

"Then——" said Mrs. Brenton, and she stopped, and all at once she drew Caroline round and looked at her almost sternly. "I think I begin to understand. There is something you are hiding, Caroline."

And Caroline made no attempt to deny it.

"There is something that I have tried to deal with single-handed, but it is growing too difficult for me," she said; and she spoke almost wearily. "It is not my secret, and I cannot share it even with you."

"What an ass I have been!" said Agnes Brenton suddenly. Then she bent forward and kissed Caroline. "Now," she said, "we stand together. I don't ask you to tell me what this trouble is. I only want you to answer two questions. Does it affect Camilla?"

Caroline said: "Yes."

"Does it affect others besides Camilla?"

Again Caroline said: "Yes." And then the words broke from her involuntarily: "It might do lasting harm to the children. It might spoil their future. I don't believe," the girl said, half passionately, "that she for one instant realizes this. I don't believe she has grasped for a single instant the danger that has threatened her."

Mrs. Brenton sighed.

"And you have managed to stand between her and this danger, but how, my dear, dear child?"

"How?" said Caroline; she laughed, but it was a wretched laugh. "Indeed, I scarcely know. I think I have attracted him just because I have been truthful with him. I have never once pretended that I liked him. And he only wants me because he thinks I am not easy to get. At the same time, I must do him this justice—he gave me a promise. It was not a little thing—indeed, remembering what he is, it was a big thing; and up to now he has kept this promise. I am only afraid he won't keep it much longer. He is getting tired," Caroline said, with a break in

her voice. "I saw a difference in his manner when he was here the other day. If I lose my power of attraction"—the girl's voice was bitter—"I am afraid all I have tried to do will be so much wasted work."

They paced to and fro, and were silent a long time. Then Agnes Brenton said:

"I must enter into this. I have every right to do so. I am glad now that Sammy is so near. I shall send and ask him to come and see me without further delay." Then she reproached Caroline. "Why did you not bring this trouble to me at once?"

Caroline caught her breath with a sigh.

"I suppose we all try to do clever things once in our life." Then she took Mrs. Brenton's hand and carried it to her lips. "I did not want you to have more to bear, dear friend. You were so unhappy, and I believed I should be able to keep this away from you always."

In a low voice a moment later, Caroline said:

"When she comes to-morrow, you will say nothing to her?" and Agnes Brenton promised.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Camilla arrived in the smartest and latest of automobiles; she was exquisitely dressed in white, and caused a flutter in the little toy watering-place on the coast of Normandy. She came not alone. There were two men and another woman with her.

Mrs. Brenton and Caroline and the children were down on the digue when she arrived, and as the children caught sight of their pretty mother and rushed to greet her, Agnes Brenton caught Caroline by the wrist.

"There is no occasion to send for Sammy," she said; "Camilla has brought him."

And when a little mist had cleared away from Caroline's eyes she saw that Mrs. Brenton had made no mistake.

It was Broxbourne himself. He looked sheepish and uncomfortable as

he caught Caroline's eyes, and he made no attempt to approach her.

When the whole party made a move toward the hotel for luncheon, Camilla caught Caroline by the hand.

"I want you, Caroline—I want to ask you something," she said. "Can you give me news of Rupert?"

"No," said Caroline, "but I have no doubt Mrs. Brenton can."

"Well, if you know nothing, I must ask Agnes, for we have heard the most extraordinary rumor about him. I thought perhaps you could tell me if it was true; I mean about his having gone to America because he has found some relations of Matthew Woolgar, and that he intends to give them all the money."

Caroline answered almost impatiently:

"I assure you I know nothing whatever about Mr. Haverford, or what he is doing. How should I?"

"Well, I hope to goodness there is no truth in this report," said Mrs. Cuthbert Baynhurst. "If there is, it is a very bad lookout for all of us."

Caroline crimsoned.

"Have you not enough already?"

With a little laugh, Camilla said:

"If you want to know the truth, we have not got *half* enough. I find Cuthbert is every bit as extravagant as I am. I wanted him to come with me to-day, but do you think I could get him away from the *petits chevaux*? Not I! And let me tell you one can lose a fair amount of money at that game, silly as it is."

Caroline stood still; there were tears in her eyes.

"Oh, dearest!" she said, "is—is it always to be the same? Is——"

Camilla whipped her round, and they walked sharply back toward the sands.

"You shan't cry for me," she said; "I'm a beast. I'm not worth it. You don't know how little I deserve your tears."

"Yes, I do," said Caroline; "but I can't help crying, because I love you, because you are the first person, you and the children, who have belonged to me, who have made life real, and because

I want the children to have a proper mother—not just a pretty doll dressed up in something new every time they see her."

"Don't!" Camilla said; then she added: "When I am with you I want to be as you want me to be, but when I am away I have not got the strength to change, and it all seems so useless; the trying, I mean." There was real depth in her voice as she said: "Do you think I don't know what I have lost? I have known it more and more every day. I expect I shall know it a good deal more surely before I come to the end of my life. It's only this excitement that makes me want to go on at all."

"I thought you were happy," Caroline said in a low, moved voice.

The other woman shrugged her shoulders and said nothing. Then, quite abruptly, she began speaking about Broxbourne.

"Do you know that ever so many people assured me you were going to marry him? I wouldn't believe it, and when I saw him in Dieppe yesterday I determined all at once that I would speak to him myself. I don't mind telling you, Caroline, that I have been dreadfully afraid of Sammy all this time; he—I mean I did something to make an enemy of him, and he can be horribly nasty when he likes. But yesterday, the moment I saw him, I was no longer afraid."

Caroline was staring at the white-flecked sea. Her heart was throbbing in her throat; to speak was beyond her.

"Yes," said Camilla; "I saw at once that the worst of his anger had burned out, and so I took my courage in both hands and went straight up to him, and I asked him boldly if I had to congratulate him. I think I rather startled him," Camilla said composedly; "anyhow, he would not speak at first, and then, when he had thawed, he told me that he had proposed to you half-a-dozen times, but that you would not have anything to do with him. He said something more; that you were the best sort he had ever come across, and that if there was anybody in the world who could pull him up and make a de-

cent fellow of him, he thought you were the person who could do it, and I could see he was in earnest. Fancy you and Sammy being such friends. You funny, quiet Caroline! Perhaps it is you who have made him so amiable to me!" But Camilla rejected this idea even as she said it. "No, I expect he knows I have done for myself this time, and as I am going to be paid out for all my sins, he feels, perhaps, he can afford to be a little generous. Anyhow, I am glad you won't have anything to do with him."

At this moment Betty came flying after them, announcing that déjeuner was ready, and that everybody was waiting.

It was a merry meal, thanks entirely to Camilla and the children, and very shortly afterward the motor-party started again from Dieppe. When they were gone, Mrs. Brenton said to Caroline:

"I don't fancy Sammy will come here any more. I tried to get five minutes alone with him, but he avoided me."

Betty pushed a letter into Caroline's hands.

"You're to read that when you're quite alone. Sammy gived it to me," she said mysteriously; then she danced off, and Mrs. Brenton, with one quick glance at the girl, turned and went into the hotel.

Caroline walked into the garden. She crossed the bridge under which the clear, white water of the mountain spring ran down to the sea, and opened Broxbourne's letter. Inside the envelope there was a sheet of paper on which nothing was written. Inside this paper there was a check.

She just glanced at it and then crushed it in her hand.

CHAPTER XIX.

Rupert Haverford came back from America about the beginning of October. He went down immediately to Yelverton.

The welcome the children gave him was a royal one; but Caroline barely touched his hand and expressed no pleasure at seeing him again. It

seemed, however, that he had something to say to her.

"I want to talk to you about the children," he said. "Will you come out into the garden?"

"I thought everything was settled for the time being?" Caroline said.

"There are various things I should like to discuss with you."

She stole a little glance at him as they walked into the well-remembered path, where now the rose-bushes were barren of bloom and the ground was carpeted with faded leaves.

He was looking wonderfully well, with that bronzed look in his skin, which made his teeth so white, and his eyes so delightful. She noticed that he seemed altogether brisker, and his first speech touched on this.

"Do you know that my trip to America has done me a lot of good? It has shaken me up—hustled me out of my old groove."

He looked at her with half a smile.

"I am glad," said Caroline.

"Are you? Well, say it a little more as if you meant it."

Against herself she laughed.

Then he stretched out his hand.

"You don't bear me any grudge, Caroline?"

"Why should I?"

She did not take his hand, and with a quick frown he let it drop to his side.

"Well, you know you have not written me a line since I have been away."

She looked at him with open eyes at this.

"Did you expect me to write?"

"Of course," he said, with a smile.

"It would have been the proper thing for a ward to do. And that brings me to the question I put to you just now. Are you still angry with me because I tried to enforce my authority when last I saw you?"

"No," she said; "I am not angry."

"Then look more pleasant."

Again she had to laugh, but it was a very transitory laugh.

"I thought you wanted to talk about the children?"

"You are one of the children," he answered.

As she made an impatient movement, he changed his tone.

"I want to talk to you about myself. I'm not exactly a child, but I find I want some one to give me just a little of the attention that you give Betty and Baby."

She grew very hot, and found it rather difficult to breathe.

"I am not satisfied with you only as a ward," Haverford said, and there was an indescribable note of tenderness in his voice, "because there are such difficulties in the way of seeing you. I want you for something closer, better, more helpful. Caroline, will you be my wife?"

She stopped dead, and looked at him with eyes ablaze; then, in a choked voice, she said:

"No!" and then again: "No!" and then she walked on very quickly. He followed her.

"You can't mean that," he said, his tone one of absolute astonishment.

She answered him over her shoulders: "I do most emphatically."

He looked quite dismayed, and the girl broke in hurriedly: "Of course it is very astonishing, I suppose; but call it a caprice, if you like; I have an objection to marrying a very rich man. I have an objection," she said, with quivering lips, "to be chosen for a wife just as somebody would choose a carpet or a piece of furniture."

"Good God!" said Haverford. "Do you suppose that I want to buy you?"

"I don't suppose anything," said Caroline, "except that I thank you very much for your offer, and decline it."

He let her walk on, and stood looking after her bewildered and pained. She had grown so closely into his thoughts of late, she had become so individualized with all his new schemes for the future, she was so necessary, so dear, so precious—especially since he had learned how he had misjudged her, and Mrs. Brenton had lost very little time in making him acquainted with this—he could hardly realize that she had turned so deliberately away from him.

He made no effort to follow her,

however; there had been something authoritative in her voice and in her manner—something that stung him almost reproachfully. But his chief sensation was a rueful realization of failure.

"I am a vain, clumsy fool!" he said to himself, with a vast amount of irritation.

CHAPTER XX.

At Christmas-time Mrs. Cuthbert Baynhurst joined the Yelverton party unexpectedly. She wore her beautiful sables, and looked quite radiant when she arrived. As usual, she seemed to charge the atmosphere with excitement of a pleasant nature.

Mrs. Brenton received her beautiful guest warmly; nevertheless, it was quickly evident to Camilla that there was something on the older woman's mind.

"Don't hesitate to send me away if you don't want me," she said easily. "I can easily go back to town, or to Lea Abbey, or—well, anywhere, you know."

"Of course I shan't turn you away," said Agnes Brenton. Then she added, coloring a little: "Only, I must wire to Rupert; we expected him for Christmas."

Camilla laughed ever so prettily.

"Dear soul, why should you? We have met already several times. You see," she added quite seriously, "when things went so horribly bad with Cuthbert and me two months ago, I was obliged to send and ask Rupert to come and help me. And he was so kind. He arranged everything. You know, don't you, that Cuthbert and I have agreed to separate—at any rate, for a little while? Perhaps when he does not find life quite so easy he may alter. His temper, my dear Agnes, is something beyond description; and he is so lazy, and so difficult! Rupert suggests I should go back to my own little house, and have a chaperon to live with me. I supposed that Caroline would be quite enough, but from something Rupert said, I fancied, perhaps, she had some new plans in her mind."

"I have heard nothing," said Mrs. Brenton.

She had listened to this speech with a confusion of feeling. Camilla's easy acceptance of a most difficult position was not, perhaps, so very extraordinary, but other people worked a little more slowly.

After all, Haverford was not at Yelverton for Christmas. He wired from the north that he was ill—had caught a violent cold, and was unable to travel.

He was not too ill, however, to forget his Christmas remembrances.

Packages kept arriving by every post, and the children were in a ferment of excitement.

Camilla got a very lovely and unique necklace, composed of pieces of jade strung on a fine chain, alternating with emeralds.

Caroline's gift was a writing-table, and when the heavily laden post-bag was opened on Christmas morning there was a letter also.

She kept it for several hours unopened, and then stole out into the cold garden to read it. It was not very long. He had the trick of going straight to the point. But it was a letter that moved her deeply—that made her heart beat and her eyes dim. He called her "dearest," and once he wrote "dear, capricious Caroline."

He did not claim her boldly this time, nor did he plead too much. There was a directness in his simplicity that almost made her waver. But she delayed answering till the morrow; and all that evening, as she felt the old irresistible fascination of Camilla's beautiful presence hold her in sway, she felt equally her heart grow steady and that strange rush of joy die down.

"It is impossible—impossible," she said to herself; and though she put her words as gently as she knew how, she wrote and for a second time refused to be his wife.

Camilla was happy at Yelverton for a week or two, but all at once she got restless and went up to town for a few days. From there she announced that she was going to pay one or two country visits.

Yelverton was very quiet without her,

and the children fretted for her a good deal.

Caroline herself was actually conscious of a sensation of void and loneliness. She could not pass the room where Camilla had been without a sort of pang.

Long ago she had ceased to question or to speculate on the extraordinary power of this other woman; to ask herself why or why not certain things should be. She simply recognized that, despite all that had gone and all that might come, she loved Camilla with a deep and an anxious love, and would always give homage to the caressing, the bewitching influence of this beautiful, this most unreliable, of women.

One day Caroline left the children playing hide-and-seek in the hall, and went out for a little walk.

She pushed on quickly till she left the house well behind her, and then she sat down and closed her eyes. Of late there had been many moments when she had felt tired out in spirit, when life would seem empty and unprofitable; such a mood fell upon her now.

With a sigh she leaned back and closed her eyes. Then all at once she was conscious that some one was watching her, and she opened her eyes quickly. In reality, Rupert was not looking at her, but was pacing to and fro in front of the bench.

As she sat forward with a jerk, he turned and came hurriedly toward her.

"What madness brought you out here to sleep?" he queried almost sharply.

Caroline knit her brows.

"I don't think I have been asleep," she answered; then, confusedly: "How long have you been here?"

"Ten minutes—a quarter of an hour."

He continued to look at her fixedly.

"You are ill," he said; "you look very white. Mrs. Brenton wrote me she was anxious about you—that is what brought me down to-day."

This brought the color flaming to her cheeks.

"I am perfectly well; I am always well."

He bent forward, took both her cold hands, and drew her to her feet. For

an instant he chafed her hands almost unconsciously. Then they walked on a little, Caroline as in a dream.

Suddenly he paused, and, catching her hands again more closely, faced her. There were tears in her eyes, just ready to run down her cheeks.

"If you are well, why are you crying?" he asked abruptly; then, tenderly: "Come, Caroline, be honest with me. Something is wrong, and I must know what that something is. Don't you realize that I would give my life to be sure that you were happy? Have you the least idea what you are to me—how much I love you?"

She shook her head, and then she looked up and her lips smiled for an instant.

"How should I know these things? You have never told them to me."

"Surely yes," he said.

"Surely no," she answered. "That day you spoke to me just after you came back from America, you simply stated to me the fact that you found you required a wife, and that you considered me a suitable person for the situation, and your letter at Christmas was just the same thing."

"I knew I had done some clumsy thing," he said remorsefully, "but, dearest, sweetest heart, you must have known that I love you."

He unloosened her hands as he spoke, meaning to gather her into his arms, but she placed those two little hands in protesting fashion against his heart.

"No; wait!" she said. "It can't be true. Remember what she was to you. If you are the man I imagine you to be, then you are not one to easily forget. You—you can't love me if you loved her."

He smiled, but he answered her gravely.

"Since you have apparently studied me and my nature so well, the whole situation should be clear to you. Other people might doubt, but not you, Caroline. You were so closely mingled in with that episode, you must have realized that when she took herself out of my life everything appertaining to her faded absolutely into the background;

the way had been prepared for this so thoroughly. You know that evening I came down here that I was clinging to a last hope, even though I knew how poor it was. I confess," he said, with a faint smile, "that had we separated differently some sentiment might have lingered; it was the way she did this that swept my heart clean. And yet," he added, "I am wrong to deny all sentiment. I am her friend. I am glad to be her friend, and I shall never cease trying to help her to the happiness she craves for; but I shall never succeed. No one can help her. It is her destiny to be a disappointment to herself, and to all who have her interest at heart."

Caroline shivered a little. Her hands had dropped. They were standing apart now.

"And still she holds one. There is a sort of spell about her," she said, in a low voice; "you must recognize that. I, too, have suffered through her, and yet——" Then she bit her lip, flushed crimson, and said passionately: "I could never share! Don't think I am only sensible, and practical, and quiet. I know myself better; I am capable of horrid feelings, and my temper can be quite savage. I don't want to fill a gap. I want all for myself. Why, even when I realize what she was to you, I feel as if I could suffocate!"

She was turning away, but he caught her by the shoulder and wheeled her round.

"Do you know what that means?" he said, in a curious voice. "That means that you love me. And do you suppose I am going to let you slip out of my life now that I know this? Caroline, you shall not deny me my right!"

He was holding her so tightly that he almost hurt her.

The color waned in her face, and came back with a rush as she tried to look at him and could not meet his eyes.

"When will you marry me?" he asked.

She gasped.

"Oh, please!" she said. "I don't think I said anything to—to—but if—

suppose that I should care for you a little, that does not mean that——" she broke off. "Really, I cannot marry you," she said then, with a note of desperation in her voice.

Haverford laughed.

"Why? Give me one good reason, and I will let you go."

She had to laugh, too, but she would not yield easily. She enumerated many reasons.

"The children need me; it is so soon; I have ever so many things I want to do this year." Then, finally, and a little weakly: "I don't want to marry at all."

"There is not one honest reason in all these, and the last is the weakest of the lot," he said coolly. "I really cannot listen to it. You must think of something else."

"I can hear the children," Caroline said in a hurry. "Listen! Don't you hear them calling for me? I am convinced they will have forgotten their coats, and this wind is so cold."

Rupert's eyes glistened.

"Let them come. I will refer the matter to Betty. She will soon settle everything."

Caroline turned crimson, and then she put out her hand.

"Perhaps—I will marry you—but it must be ever so far off. Wait—will you wait?" she asked half wistfully.

He stooped, and, despite the fact that the children were very near now, he kissed her hands and then her lips.

"You know I will—all my life, if you insist," he answered.

But Caroline did not keep him waiting quite so long.



LOVE'S APRIL

I WATCHED a rosebud silently unfold.

(Oh, Love comes softly, secretly.)

The opal petals mellowed into gold.

A dewdrop from the center rose and rolled.

(Oh, Love is mystery!)

A zephyr breathed upon a lilac bough.

(Oh, Love is bitter-sweet distress.)

The loosened perfume falling smote my brow.

My heart was gladdened and I know not how.

(Oh, Love is joyfulness!)

The rosebud laid her summered beauty wide.

(Oh, Love, intense, is pain, is pain.)

The zephyr kissed her and she glowed with pride.

The zephyr loitered laughing on—she died.

(Oh, Love is vain, is vain!)

MARGARET HOUSTON.

TWO WHITE BLACKBIRDS



N unspeakable dreariness of weather—the result of a penetrating east wind and a

drizzle of mingled snow and rain just above the freezing-point—was rendering the usual conditions of traffic on the island of Manhattan almost unendurable. Crowds of enraged humanity, trying to escape as quickly as possible from the wet and chill around them, pursued the overladen trolleys hurrying to make up time after the endless blocks and obstructions along their tracks, past their legitimate stopping-place into the slush and snow of the uncleared street beyond. Cabs and coal carts, and vans as big as small houses, threaded their way continually in and out, regardless of all laws of man or beast save the law of the strongest. Horses slipped and fell, recovered themselves, and fell again, to rise no more. The electric cabs were at an advantage in the midst of the struggling mass. The glutinous substance which covered the slippery pavements was too soft to stop the progress of their great rubber wheels, and the ice underneath, which was destroying the horses, had no appreciable effect on their powers of locomotion.

Just above Forty-second Street, one of these more fortunate vehicles was moving at a foot-pace amid the ever-thickening crowd which marked the approach to that entangled thoroughfare, along the narrow passage left it beside the line of immovable cars, blocked indefinitely as far as the eye could reach. The sole occupant, a man well past intemperate youth, with a handsome nose, a bland, smooth-shaven face,

and blinking, gray eyes, pulled down the glass and looked forth when the cab came to a temporary standstill, with a stare of irritated inquiry as to the cause of this new delay.

Just then, on the platform of the car nearest him, there appeared a feminine figure—a slender, confident creature, with a clear tinted face, and a distinction of bearing which made her stand out from the wavering, crowded ugliness around her, like a flower or a star. She hesitated a moment on the step of the car, looking here and there, waiting for a propitious moment to venture herself into the tangle of vehicles. Then with a swift alertness she sprang to the muddy street under the heads of the advancing horses, between the melting heaps of snow, till she reached the other side, where she stood a moment to examine the damage done to her attire, to shake the drops of mud from her skirt, and then, still holding it deftly together in one hand, to put up her umbrella. By this time the electric cab had come to another stop close to the curbstone. Its door opened and the gentleman inside joined her upon the pavement. Her first surprise on hearing her name pronounced unexpectedly beside her changed, as soon as she saw who it was, into a kind of startled pleasure, not unmixed with embarrassment.

"Oh, I had not heard that you were back!" she cried, quickly recovering herself. "Isn't it a horrible day? Not much like the Mediterranean. Don't you wish you were there now?"

"I landed last Saturday; I am going to Florida next week," he answered a little primly. Having no obligations in life, except to enjoy himself, he instinctively resented even the imputa-

tion that he could ever be where he would not, such a state of things arguing either weakness or incapacity on his part. She smiled blithely. "You are a lucky creature to be able to do as you please. New York is a dreadful place to tussle with in these conditions."

"Can't I take you somewhere?" he said politely. "I saw you get out of the car just now. There seems no end to the block."

She hesitated. "I am trying to get to the office of *The Review*, in Union Square. I ought to be there now. It will be very good of you. But I am afraid I am rather damp and unpleasant for a gentleman's carriage. You may repent when you see how wet my umbrella is."

"Nonsense," he said, with a slight show of temper, as he followed her into the cab. Yet he was evidently a man for whom the minor matters of life had a distinct importance. He did not let his wavering gray eyes rest directly on his companion, but one felt a certain scrutiny in their vagueness which did not overlook, though it might forgive, the splashes of mud and snow upon her skirt, and he took away her umbrella and arranged it with a kind of deft carefulness where it would do the least harm.

"You have a cold," he said prosaically, as the automobile renewed its slow progress down-town.

Only a person who remembered her voice very well would have noticed anything unnatural in its slightly veiled and husky tones.

"Oh, not much," she answered, somewhat annoyed. She had reached the age when to be told she looked ill was the same thing as to be told of her temporary eclipse in the qualities by which she preferred to commend herself, and she tried to strangle and check the cough which threatened from time to time to break in upon her voice, impatient of this unerring evidence that she was not at her best.

"It is this unspeakable weather," she continued, with a sort of apology. "It has been going on for a week now. Every one I know has a cold or pneu-

monia. Fortunately, I am rather strong. I don't mind it much."

"How is your brother Johnnie this winter?"

She replied with a certain reluctance: "Johnnie has been very ill again. It is his lungs, I am afraid. They are all down in the country still. They may go South when he gets a little stronger."

"And you are here alone—as usual?"

"Yes, alone—as usual," she answered, with a quick glance to see if she could surprise him in adverse criticism. But his expression continued perfectly bland and courteous.

"And very busy? I suppose you are still working for that publisher?"

"Yes, I am very busy, but I don't mind that. The natural condition of my circumstances is not so brilliant that it takes all my leisure to enjoy them. And then, I really like hard work. It gives a point and dignity to existence. I like to feel my powers and try my wits against the world just as a man does."

"I don't," he answered quickly, with an irritation which betrayed his conscience jaded, if not convinced, by the clamor still raised in this country against any man who persists in his choice to live without working for his living.

"I know you don't," she replied, laughing; "but I wasn't thinking of you when I spoke that way. You are one of the people who have enough money to do nothing gracefully."

He shrugged his shoulders. "I can't say that I agree with you. Only a very rich man is entirely excused for doing nothing in this part of the world. You are in the fashion by preferring honest labor to idleness—or you would be if you were not a woman."

She made a little face as he reverted from his own grievance to hers.

"But, since I am a woman—a woman who chooses to work to gain my living from the world without the excuse of any great talent, or the spur of real necessity—I must make up my mind to be eternally criticized, to be pelted with questions as to my real motives and

reasons for a perfectly simple course of conduct, called upon every minute to declare how far satisfied I am by my choice. I wonder whether women who have chosen husbands would be able to stand the test as well as I am?"

He laughed gently at her vivacity.

"I didn't mean to annoy you," he said demurely.

She answered at once: "And you did not—or you wouldn't have annoyed me if you had never said anything else. It was not just now you hurt my feelings. It is the other things you used to do and say—all last summer, from the very first moment we found ourselves on your sister's yacht together. It was natural for a man like you to have nothing in common with me, to be perfectly indifferent to my existence, as you always had been till that moment, but it was not necessary for you to lose no chance of trying to snub me for a whole lot of horrid, ugly qualities you had quietly gone and imputed to me on the basis that I was a conceited, strong-minded woman. I am not. I dislike that kind of woman just as much as you do." The resolute good temper of her tones took away from the sharpness of her words.

"But I thought you had forgiven me for all that?" he said gently. "I can't believe you have forgotten what good friends we were before we reached Gibraltar."

"Yes, we were," she answered, smiling quite frankly. "I ought not to have gone back to it, and I never should if in the meantime you had not reverted to your original attitude."

"I assure you——" he was beginning with a sudden increase of energy, when their cab, having finally made its way into one of those little nests of publishing houses in the lower part of the city, stopped abruptly before the foundations of a tower-like building which raised its tall head above them into the dripping sky.

"Here we are, arrived," cried his companion, in tones of keen satisfaction, "and not so late, after all." She glanced at her watch, which she drew from its place at her belt. "I can't

thank you enough for the lift you have given me."

He was between her and the cab door, but he made no movement at first to let her descend.

"Where are you going to lunch?" he asked.

"To lunch—to lunch?" She looked at him vaguely a moment, till her thoughts came back to him in a flash of laughter. "I don't know. It depends upon how much time I have. Somewhere about here, probably."

"You had better come home with me," he said calmly. "It won't take any longer to eat in one place than another, and at least you will have a comfortable meal."

She raised her eyebrows in pleased surprise, but hesitated so long over her reply that he added, with friendly impertinence: "Are you wondering whether it will be proper to lunch alone with a man in his own house?"

She laughed. "Certainly not. You know as well as I that nothing I could do would be in the least improper. What is the use of character otherwise? No, I—in fact, I——"

She was standing on the sidewalk by this time, shivering a little as the icy east wind struck her, on its way from over the frozen water. "I was only wondering whether I wasn't feeling too stupid just now to amuse either myself or you by accepting your invitation."

She looked suddenly very haggard and ill.

But he brushed her excuse aside. "I shall be here for you at half-past one," he reiterated, in the tone of a man used to having his way. "I am glad she always wears such good clothes," he said to himself musingly, as she vanished under the portals of the tall office-building, "and good gloves. It is extraordinary how careless even well-dressed women can be about these little details."

Lawrence Beach was still in possession of an ample old house which he and his father had shared in common for many years, till the older man died, a short time ago. They had both been noted for a hospitality which by

its very narrowness had ended in conferring a certain honor upon its recipients. But Virginia Mead, in spite of her intimate relations with various married daughters of the family, in spite of her superficial friendliness for Lawrence himself, had never in all the past been invited to one of their little dinners. She remembered this fact very well, and it afforded her a good deal of secret amusement as she found herself being ushered up the long staircase hung with handsome prints, to a large front room, where she found all possible conveniences for repairing the ravages of her toilet—where she saw that Lawrence had neglected none of the *petits soins* he was wont to pay those women whom he distinguished with his attentions, even to the bunch of violets lying on the dressing-table, with a purple pin beside it to be used in fastening it on. "What a nuisance I should be feeling so ill to-day!" she said to herself as she looked in the glass intently while she was arranging her hair, hoping that her own increasing physical discomfort did not show itself too clearly in her appearance. "It would have been so much more amusing if I were really up to the mark. Perhaps I shall feel better when I have had something to eat."

But when Lawrence pushed in her chair at the dining-room table, he saw that she was shivering a little, and noticed that her lips were blue. She passed it off lightly, however. "I am chilled for the moment by coming out of that hot office into the street. It will be gone as soon as I have something to eat."

"And drink," he added, and poured her out some whisky. But her color did not really come back till they had finished luncheon and gone into the library to drink their coffee. And even then the languor and lassitude of increasing physical oppression showed itself intermittently through all the gay courage of her manner, though she put it aside again and again, as if impatient of it for interfering with an occasion which was evidently amusing and exciting to them both. For his glance,

though wavering and uncertain, never entirely meeting hers, never really ceased to dwell upon her, and from time to time, as he watched her, he drew his narrow gray eyes together with a kind of critical appreciation of her as she sat leaning forward in her chair, her elbows propped up on its supporting arms, her pretty hands interlaced, or brought together at the points of her delicate squared fingers, or separated altogether as she spread them forth to emphasize what she was saying.

"We all missed you very much after you left us in Gibraltar," he said at last, after a moment of silence. "Your going quite broke up the party. I would probably have asked you to marry me if you had stayed much longer." His manner was too expressionless to be perfectly serious, and she preferred to take his remark entirely in jest.

"How nice of you! You can't imagine how it flatters me to hear you say so. You have always liked such very charming women."

"As long as a woman declares herself flattered by a man's admiration, he can be quite sure she doesn't really care for him," said Lawrence sententiously.

"You know a great deal about women," Virginia remarked, with a touch of malice; "more than I do myself, in fact. But, then, I was never introspective. I never had the time."

"You are very charming," he remarked, with a little conversational tone in his voice to temper its caress.

She contradicted him gayly. "Oh, no, you know I am not! Sometimes I think I might be if I put my whole mind to it; but one can't be a really charming woman without time and thought and attention. I have never had time to be anything but rather—agreeable."

He was looking at her with a kind of affectionate amusement, but he didn't notice that she caught her breath and held it sharply a moment before she could finish her sentence.

"What do you mean by my having gone back to my original attitude?" he asked.

"Never mind. Don't let us go back to it again. And you will go back to it if we begin to talk about it, or I will think you do, which is just as bad. Besides, you were going away next week, without making the slightest effort to see me."

"I was not," he answered flatly. "I had made every arrangement to see you. This was merely an accident."

"Yes, and I was so grateful to you for helping me to keep that odious appointment."

She spoke with a sharpness which made him look toward her in mild surprise. "Why odious?"

"Oh, nothing. It turned out badly, that is all. One of the difficulties of being a woman in this world is that one always gets a great deal more or a great deal less than one deserves, but never one's just rewards. I should think I might sometimes escape the curse, not having those large, obvious feminine qualities which would strike the first observer."

"You are one of the most feminine women I know," he said, with an air of telling her something which might annoy her.

She laughed a little. "You didn't always think so—but it is quite true; I know I am. It is for that alone that I have just been snubbed so unreasonably. I didn't obtrude it, I didn't assert it. It was just the texture of my mind, which I can't help, which made me set my business forth in a way which annoyed the male mind I was trying to impress—all the more because he couldn't help being beguiled into a sort of interest in it. But he was strictly on his guard. He was dimly conscious all the time of something not quite legitimate in the effect I had on him. He strengthened himself by being politely disagreeable when he refused to be convinced. I didn't want him to be convinced, except by my arguments. I hardly remembered he was a man while I was talking to him, but I can see, on looking back, that he never for a moment forgot that I was a woman."

He uncrossed his legs, moved uneasily in his chair, and looked about

him vaguely. She noticed his constraint and hastened to add: "But I am boring you. It is a stupid subject. Let us talk of something else for a few moments, and then I must go."

"Oh, no," he said; "it is quite early. What you have been saying is very interesting. All the same, I think you are rather hard on men. Of course it is natural for them to resent it when they feel that they are being made fools of."

"I never made a fool of a man in my life, either consciously or unconsciously," said Virginia, with frank amusement. He shut his eyes for a moment and moved his head to and fro uneasily against the back of his chair, answering in rather a sulky tone:

"There is a kind of indifference in a woman which some men would resent more than being made fools of."

"Fortunately, I have nothing vital to do with what any man thinks of me," she answered in a tone of such visible effort and languor that he opened his eyes wide and looked at her. She met his glance of inquiry with an attempt at a laugh. "I am going home, and you will be very wise to do all you can to hasten my departure. If I stay much longer I shall be feeling too ill to go at all."

He sprang to his feet, full of commiseration, yet even more annoyed to find that she had been putting a constraint upon herself, to her own discomfort, for his amusement during all the time they had been spending together. She hastened to explain to him: "I have been having a perfectly nice time till this moment. And you saved my life when you met me this morning, for I ought not to have gone out at all. It is only a cold, and only the last few moments has it been getting really bad. But I think it will be better for me to go home now and do something about it."

She remained up-stairs so long when she went to get ready that he began to be anxious, but she looked somewhat revived when she came down at last, with her veil and furs on. He insisted, however, in accompanying her home in a cab, and went up with her in the elevator to the door of her apartment, and

took the latch-key from her when he saw her hand was shaking so much that she could not find the keyhole. But she had rung the bell before he succeeded in opening the door. "I want to speak to Selma," she said in explanation. A large-featured, white-faced Swede appeared in the long, narrow hallway at the note of summons. Her impassive countenance showed a certain mild surprise at the sight of her mistress returning at this unusual hour with a strange gentleman.

"I am ill, Selma," said Virginia, with rather a dim smile. "Will you go and get my room ready? I want to lie down." Then she turned to Lawrence. "Will you come in for a minute? If I am going to be ill, and I think I am, there are one or two things you might do for me, if you will."

He followed her down the hall into a contracted little drawing-room, whose tortuous shape and encroaching doors and windows effectually limited any originality in the arrangement of its furniture. Virginia sat down on a chair at the writing-table and put her hand over her eyes for a moment. "I have to think—I can't quite remember. Oh, yes; I must send word to my office." She gave the address. "I shan't be there this afternoon. And, then, there is a woman—fortunately, we were discussing it only the other day, when I thought I might have to go into the country on account of Johnnie's illness. She will understand; she can take my place. But she won't be in till after five o'clock."

"I will see about that," he said. "I'll wait and let you know how she answers."

"And now I must send for a doctor, I suppose," she went on languidly, drawing the telephone toward her from where it stood on the desk. "I haven't an idea who to call up. I am never ill. I never have had any one since our old family physician died."

"Leave all that to me," he said very gently. "I must try to find somebody who will come immediately. And you had better go to bed without waiting any longer."

"Yes," she said, relinquishing the telephone-book to him. "And he can see about a nurse and all that—whatever he likes. I'll do anything they think best, but don't tell any one, you know, please, that I am ill. People are very kind, but they are always interfering. I would rather have everything arranged before my friends begin to know that anything is the matter with me."

He held her hand a moment, assuring her of his discretion and zeal in her service, noticed the increasing heaviness of her eyes as she smiled her thanks, the languor of her movements as she left him to his self-assumed tasks. Then he applied himself to the telephone, and waited in the little drawing-room till the doctor came and made his visit. He received his information of the seriousness of the case with a calm appropriateness which laid all questions of there being any other person on whom such an obligation might fall with better grace.

The doctor, a man of Beach's own acquaintance, spoke tentatively about the need of being in close communication with Miss Mead's nearest relatives. Lawrence informed him that her brother and his family were in the country for the winter, only to be appealed to in extremity. "I will take the responsibility of whatever you think necessary," he said with a calm assurance that admitted no appeal. There was a great deal of responsibility, and a great deal to be done, for the disease was double pneumonia, which had already made alarming progress. Beach stayed till the nurse came, late that evening. He returned the next morning, and was there at intervals next day, and, in fact, during all the days the swift inflammation was running its course, quietly efficient in the emergencies when the disease outstripped its normal progress and put its attendants to momentary confusion. In an accident to the oxygen, he was admitted into the sick-room itself. She was not unconscious, though her own desperate straits made it doubtful whether she recognized him. But before the week was over there had come a change for the better. The lungs had

begun to clear, the breathing was easier. The doctor had declared himself satisfied with her condition. Lawrence was receiving this encouraging information from the white-capped, white-aproned nurse just outside Virginia's door, when he heard her voice faintly calling him in. She was lying propped high up in bed. A certain freshness and precision in her surroundings showed that her nurse had just been busy about her. She looked strangely little changed or disfigured by her experiences. The delicate balance of her face had not been altered, as after a long illness. She had more color than usual, and her eyes the peculiar languid brightness of fever, but though still very ill, her face had lost the shadow and anguish of his last remembrance of her.

"You look very well," he said encouragingly; "better than you are, no doubt. I have been sitting next door, and know how you have been coughing all the morning."

"Oh!" she smiled, with a little deprecatory gesture. "What a nuisance I have been making of myself! I called you in to thank you. I don't know what I should have done without you. You can't imagine what a feeling of confidence it gave me to know that you were here all the time, ready for whatever might happen." She smiled upon him very softly. He glanced around the room and then at the nurse standing serenely by.

"Why don't you go now and get your lunch while I am here, Miss Taylor? I see Selma has it ready for you. And I'll call you if Miss Mead wants anything while you are away. I won't let her tire herself."

Miss Taylor did as she was told, with perfect docility. Lawrence drew up a chair in which he could make himself comfortable. Virginia watched him, smiling. "You are too funny. You order them all about, and not one of them thinks of gainsaying you."

"They have all taken a great deal for granted," he replied demurely, "and I have done nothing to deceive them. Under the circumstances, it was more convenient to have them think as they

pleased." There was a moment's silence. Then he continued: "Your friends are just beginning to find out that you are ill. Fannie Morris called you up by telephone this morning while I was reading the paper in the drawing-room, to inquire how you were."

"And did you answer her?" said Virginia, with scandalized amusement. He was silent a moment, then answered deliberately: "It was her butler, I believe. Perhaps I had better leave the telephone to Selma in future."

"It might leave less to be explained afterward," she assented. "But I suppose now in a few days you will be off on your travels again. How glad you will be to get away from this horrible winter! I wish I was going, too."

"Come with me," he said. "I will wait till you are strong enough."

She leaned back among her pillows, looking at him with languid amusement. "I wish I could, but I am afraid it wouldn't be quite proper."

"Make it proper. You needn't consider the risk, in the present state of our divorce law."

She laughed faintly. "That is so like you. It is pleasant to find the world amusing again."

"I assure you I am perfectly in earnest in what I said just now," he remarked, with an immovable countenance. "I don't know how I am going to convince you of the seriousness of my feeling toward you. I don't want to bore you about it."

"Nothing you could say would bore me," she answered gently. "Besides, it is your metier, you know, not to bore any one. But suppose we wait till I am quite myself again before we go into our future relations."

"Very well." He paused for a moment and then began again, almost in spite of himself: "You see, it is just that which is involved—the question of your getting well. I don't believe you know how ill you have been."

"Yes, I do," she said, nodding her head.

"It will be a long time before you are really well and strong. You need care—more care, in fact, and—ah!—

and expenditure than you would ever spare on yourself. Your health is an object of great importance to me. I would like to be in a position to overlook its reestablishment."

She was quite silent a moment, lying back on her pillows and making little folds in the counterpane with her languid fingers. Suddenly she raised her eyes to his. "You can trust me," she said. "I shall take the greatest care of myself. I have money of my own—besides my income, I mean. I have earned a good deal, and I will spend it all, as much of it as is necessary, as much as you would do for me. I shall take no chances about getting well, and as soon as that comes I will do anything you wish, give you anything you choose to ask me."

"Thank the Lord!" he exclaimed, leaning toward her with a sudden movement of unexpected tenderness, and then, seeing that the effort of her speech had brought on an attack of coughing, he ministered to her wants with calm dexterity. At last he saw her lie back among her pillows, spent, exhausted, her eyes half closed, her breath coming fitfully through her parted lips.

She spoke at last, plaintively, with difficulty keeping back her tears. "If you know how it humiliates me to think that you have seen me through all this!" she sighed.

"A pretty woman is always pretty, in whatever conditions she may find herself," said Lawrence sententiously. "I am sorry you won't accept my plans for you. Your convalescence, which I fear will be long, and certainly very stupid to us both separately, would have a great deal that was very pleasant about it, if it was carried on in combination."

"I haven't voice enough to explain to you," she said faintly, "so if you don't understand at once, I am afraid you will have to wait till I am strong enough

to try again. I am not the kind of woman who has been pining secretly all my life for a male domestic creature of my own. I should be quite content as I am if I hadn't happened to fall in love with you." She stopped to take breath, while he permitted his face to fall into lines of gratified complacency.

"It isn't that I am not perfectly willing to give up everything I have been doing," she continued, rather more faintly.

"Oh, don't think of that now," he said easily. "I should leave you free to do as you choose. I am not enough of a man myself to ask a woman to give up all her life to me."

"You are so much of a man," said Virginia breathlessly, "that it will take all I am, all I have, to keep you, to please you. I must please you, if I marry you. I couldn't bear it if I weren't all you want and more besides. I won't ask you to put yourself for a moment in my place. You couldn't, or it would annoy you to try. But, you see, from the time I was a little girl, I have never let any one take care of me; it terrifies me now to think of changing all my relations with the world, to see things come toward me and feel that it is you, not I, who are going to meet them."

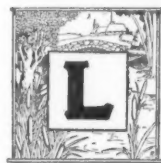
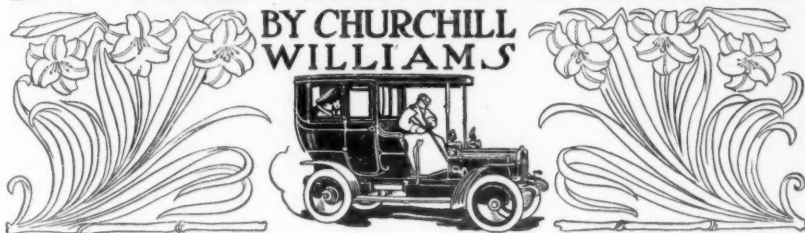
"You needn't take it that way, if you don't like it," he said gently, putting his hand over hers as it lay listless on the counterpane beside her.

But she smiled faintly as she shook her head. "I must. It is the only way with you and me. And I will. I shall prefer it when I get used to it. I should never even have mentioned it if I hadn't been ill this way. But now you must let me wait. You must give me time to get back my nerve and pluck. It requires a little of both, don't you see it does, Lawrence?—just for the moment, to let go and give myself up for the rest of my life to being protected?"



IN THE LIMOUSINE

BY CHURCHILL
WILLIAMS



LOUIS BROSSARD gripped the brake-lever viciously, and the big Panhard "forty" came to a grinding stop. He snapped the reverse into place, and the machine, with a swish of gravel, shot backward upon the concrete floor of the washing-shed. Brossard cut out his engine, and himself dropped to the ground. He was broad-shouldered and resolute, with dark eyes and a jetty mustache, whose astounding twists were the triumphant cultivation of dexterous fingers and long and artistic endeavor.

But just now Brossard's brow was lowering, his eyes were clouded, and he was grumbling and gnawing recklessly that admirable decoration of his upper lip. Had he not reason? After an afternoon on the detested Belgian blocks and tire-cutting tracks of the city, checked by blockaded vehicles again and again, and compelled to stop as often at the bidding of his master, he had at last swung his car into the stretch of level road to "The Poplars," only to have Mr. Mutchler announce: "After all, I shall need you this evening, Brossard. Have the car at the door at six-thirty sharp. I am going to dine out."

Brossard had been a chauffeur long, and his acknowledgment of the order had been all it should have been. But in his heart? How he raged! Three days before he had asked for this night for himself, and it was all arranged with

Marie. He was to come for her at seven o'clock, and there was a little corner in the Café Edouard where there were things to be had for the equivalent of four francs a head, of which the gross appetites and uneducated palates of these Americans had no appreciation. After that and a bottle of that fine sweet wine, whose label Brossard could recognize at fifty paces, arm in arm Marie and he were to go to a theater where *Camille* was to live and die again for them. And then was to come the walk under the stars to Marie's home.

They had many things to talk of, Marie and he, and it all came to this: When Louis' account-book at the savings fund should show five hundred dollars more to his credit, presto! Mr. Mutchler would find himself without the services of his incomparable chauffeur; and Louis would find himself a married man. There would be a wedding-journey—a wonderful one across the water. After that—well, Louis had no fears; and as for Marie, she snapped her fingers, and her black eyes sparkled with contempt when once he playfully asked her did she not sometimes tremble for her future with him?

Yet it was not the decision of a moment, this intention to leave "The Poplars." Brossard had been a chauffeur for five years; before that a mechanic in the great French factory for as many more. He had come to America with Mr. Mutchler; he had known no other employer, and he wished for no better, except for one thing. Mr. Mutchler

was married, and of that fact Mr. Mutchler found no need to assure himself. Therefore, the first question he had asked Louis when about to engage him was: "Have you what they call a wife?"

Louis had smiled at the idea then. What wanted he with a wife? The sweet "One! Two! Three! Four!" of the cylinders, the clear whine of the gears, the soft whirl of the swift, revolving wheels, were the dearest sounds to his ears; the shining body and burnished brass of his Panhard the dearest sight to his eyes. And so he had been engaged by Mr. Mutchler, and all had been well—until he came upon Marie one day. She was tying her shoe at a convenient step, and when Brossard, who knew an ankle when he saw it, twisted about in his seat, she had raised a little flushed face and called over her shoulder: "Monsieur! Your automobile! It is on fire!"

Of course it was not on fire, but Brossard's heart from that hour was; and Marie herself was never exactly cold.

So it soon was arranged, all but for that one obstacle—Mr. Mutchler's foot. That member Mutchler had planted squarely and firmly in front of him when he heard of Louis' plan. "It is your choice," he declared. "I will have no married man in my employ. You knew the condition when you came, and you agreed to it."

Brossard, with tight lips and clenched hands, acknowledged by his silence that this was so. "But," he added to himself, "neither at that time did I know Marie. And she! Bah! What are one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month and this place compared to her!" But Brossard was also discreet. So he said nothing more of his intention. What was to happen was to happen, he reflected. Until then, why annoy Mr. Mutchler with the future?

When he jumped from the car at the stable of "The Poplars," however, it was in his throat to walk straight to the house and notify his employer that he would leave him a week from that day. Then recollection that but a few weeks more would make everything

much easier choked back the impulse, and he blew out his cheeks and fell to polishing the lenses of the lamps and refilling the gas-tank with carbide. While he worked he considered. This place at which Mr. Mutchler was to dine was out of town, but to reach it he must pass through the city. And on the way pass Marie's home! Therefore—why not? He remained stooping, the can of carbide in his hand. Yes, it was quite possible to have an hour this evening with Marie, even as things stood. He began to whistle—a little song of that Normandy where he was born and bred.

On the stroke of half after six o'clock the Panhard slid under the portecochère of the big house; and Mr. Mutchler laboriously got into the limousine. It was a sharp night, and the collar of his thick coat was turned up above his ears. Perhaps that was the reason he did not hear Brossard's respectful greeting. But as Brossard eased the clutch and the car slipped out into the night, Brossard smiled to himself. He had an imagination, had Brossard, and he reconstructed for himself the figure of madame when monsieur had announced that it was necessary for him to be absent from the dinner-table that evening. Brossard even permitted himself a little pity for his unhappy master.

But then the thought of Marie banished all else from his mind, and he pushed the lever into the fourth notch, the revolving gears took on a keener whine, and the great car sped forward into the broad funnel of its own white lights.

At seven-fifteen Mr. Mutchler descended at the door of his host's house, and announced reluctantly: "I shall be ready at ten o'clock, Brossard. Be on time."

"Yes, monsieur," was Brossard's reply, and with the last word slid out into the darkness again. Ah, but now that it was to Marie, how the Panhard rejoiced in the mighty power of its engine! It was four miles to Marie's home, and part of the way along city streets. What did that last matter to

Brossard? In twelve minutes he slowed up, just past the house, and in another minute there was Marie, in a long coat, her face, except for the dancing eyes, like a white flower just showing between a saucy little hat and the soft fur about her neck. Brossard lifted her into the seat beside him and explained. Was it not the devil's own luck? Nevertheless, they had two hours left them, and if they could not see "Camille," they could spend the more time at Edouard's. For the disappointment, too, there should be as consolation a bottle of champagne instead of the still wine.

Marie looked up at him from under her hat brim and whispered her happiness. From one hand she stripped the glove and slipped her fingers beneath the robe which covered his knees and so inside the big leather gauntlet of his free hand.

It was by a long circuit that the car brought them at last to Edouard's, and by eight o'clock they had forgotten everything but that they were together.

Even the incomparable Edouard had his "good" nights, and this was one of them. The sole was such as they had never eaten before, the *cotelet* a morsel of juicy meat, the salad the supreme effort of one who had blended oil and vinegar and tossed the dripping leaves for twenty years, and finally there came a pot of coffee with that suspicion of chicory which summoned visions of the boulevards and small iron tables as soon as one's nostrils breathed its fragrance.

So it happened that when the napkin about the consoling bottle hid only the emptiness of the vessel, and the contents of two tiny glasses of cognac had been absorbed to the last drop, Louis for the first time thought to look at his watch. What he saw made him rub the crystal and take a long stare. But there was no mistake. It was a quarter of ten—fifteen minutes of the hour at which by explicit order he was to be at a spot six miles away. And that by direct route. To go to Marie's home first was to take him far out of his way.

He pushed back his chair and rose. "Marie," he cried, "I am wretched! I

must go at once. Monsieur, he will rage if I am late. Madame, she await him, and he knows she is waiting, and he trembles. But you—what will you do?"

Marie made a little face. "Oh ho!" she exclaimed softly. "So I am to be left alone? Very well. Let it be so. I shall find my way home somehow—some time. You go! Who knows? Maybe I shall meet some one this evening who is not in such a grand hurry. Go! Go!"

Brossard's eyebrows came together. "That is not right, Marie," he said. "You know it is not right. I shall not permit it. You must come with me."

But Marie only laughed mockingly. "How funny you are! How you take me home—so far out of your way, and you late already? No, leave me! I look around for myself."

Brossard was drawing on his gauntlets. Suddenly he brought his gloved hands together with a great bang. "Come!" he said. "Come quick with me. I know what we will do. We will ride together—a long, long ride, and monsieur shall not be late. And you and I shall be very happy. Come with me—at once!"

Wondering and asking questions, which he answered only with a chuckle, Marie followed him down to the street and let herself be lifted up into the seat beside him in the car. Louis tucked in the great robe around her to her very chin. "This is ze idea," he whispered, as he leaned over her. "You shall ride with me to where monsieur dines. When we are near you will pull ze robe over your head and bend down, so, in the seat. You are so small, and monsieur, he will be in a hurry, and it will not be very light, and monsieur will not notice. And we will go—all the way to 'The Poplars.' After zat—after zat I bring you back to your home. What you think of zat?"

"No, no!" cried Marie. "I shall be seen. Monsieur, he will discover me. All will be lost. Let me get out, Louis. I—"

Louis, leaning farther over, stopped her protests with a kiss, and the next

moment the motor was thrumming and he was back in his place beside her. In fifteen minutes more they were climbing the sloping driveway to the house where Mr. Mutchler waited for his car. With a smothered little giggle Marie ducked her head and drew herself into such a tiny heap beneath the big folds of the robe that Louis had to look twice to make sure she had not slipped entirely out of the machine.

The car stopped opposite the front door, and Louis made ready to get out. But just then the door opened and Mr. Mutchler stood on the threshold. His coat was already donned, his hat he held in his hand. To his host just back of him he was explaining all over again. "Nothing less," he was saying, "would take me away. But Mrs. Mutchler, I know, will be nervous until she sees me at home. And in her present state excitement is to be avoided above all things. You understand my anxiety. You are such a good fellow."

Brossard, overhearing this, was sure *he* understood and very sure that no one else did, and, with discreetly bent head, to Marie he whispered: "Very quiet, now. He is coming."

But the caution was unnecessary. Mr. Mutchler descended the steps rather heavily and mounted the car. It seemed to Brossard, for the first time, as if his master was unwontedly indifferent to his surroundings, and as he shut the door of the limousine upon him Brossard smiled. "Poor man!" he said to himself. "The wine—it make him forget everything—everything but madame!" Then he climbed back into the driver's seat, and they were off.

Above the edge of the robe Marie raised her head just far enough to show a mouth shaped into a tantalizing invitation to be kissed. "My Louis!" her lips framed. "All by himself! And so lonely!" Then she swiftly ducked at the approach of Brossard's free hand.

Brossard shot into his fourth speed at the first chance. The city streets he traversed slowly; but, once on the long road to "The Poplars," he threw away caution. The Panhard was doing thirty-five miles an hour without jerk

or jar when they struck the level stretch of macadam five miles from home. Brossard reflected that his employer by now was fast asleep, and that the quicker he reached home the less chance he would have for becoming conscious of what awaited him there.

It may have been this conviction made him a little less observant than usual. It may have been that the chill mist which descended from the hills on either side obscured the roadway. At any rate, with an abruptness which suggested its appearance from the sky, a bulky shape suddenly darkened the luminous curtain of gray, and the big headlights picked out with shocking swiftness the outlines of a carriage going the same way and dead ahead. The road-bed was "crowded" heavily, the road itself was narrow.

Brossard shut off his power, his foot bore heavily on the brake, and his right hand seized the "emergency." But the headway was too great to be so suddenly overcome, and, realizing this, he threw the steering-wheel over in an effort to crowd by the vehicle.

On the instant the carriage pulled slightly over in the same direction, the forward wheel of the car ran inside of the carriage-wheel, and with a twist, which was almost adroit, amputated it neatly at the axle. The Panhard had come to a stop, and the carriage careened and rested against it. The horse, after one plunge, found itself held fast, and ceased to struggle. In a way, it was almost as if there had been no collision.

Brossard had dropped a reassuring hand upon the shoulder of Marie. "You are safe," he whispered. "Stay where you are." Then he put his face against the glass front of the limousine. Mr. Mutchler rested against the cushions, his head on his chest. Apparently he slept. Brossard dropped to the ground. With a little diplomacy, he reflected, everything might yet be well, and what he most feared be avoided.

From the carriage a man had jumped out, lantern in hand, and now was holding the horse. At Brossard's approach he held up the lantern, and, for all the

scowl which disfigured the bearded face. Brossard could have sworn that he was grinning with satisfaction. He recognized him at once as a well-to-do farmer of the neighborhood, who had had a quarrel with Mr. Mutchler over a boundary-line, and who was the outspoken enemy of automobiles and of all who rode in them. Brossard drew in his breath softly. "So!" he remarked to himself. "This is indeed bad. And all for such a wheel!" He viewed the wrecked vehicle with disgust.

The farmer lowered the lantern and walked around to the back of the carriage. He had not spoken before, and now he turned on Brossard with a sneer. "We'll see if this sort of thing can go on," he began. "We'll see if I can't drive 'long a public highway without bein' run int' and smashed t' pieces by one a them hellish enjines. We'll see 'bout thet, and we'll see 'bout one er two other things afore I let go a this. Who's with you?"

Brossard replied—lying with precision and art, spreading his arms apart to emphasize his desolation. Of course there must be a new wheel for the carriage, he added. And he would pay for it on the spot. He thrust a hand into his pocket.

The owner of the vehicle spat into the road, and his grin became palpable. A new wheel? Yes, that and a good deal more. This was not a matter of a few dollars or to be settled offhand. This time the disregard of other people's safety was going to be fixed in the mind of Brossard beyond forgetting. And the first step should be made by a visit to the squire's. It was half-a-mile up the road. Brossard would find the walking good.

Brossard protested, but in a low key. If Mr. Mutchler were awakened, there might be other discoveries made. And there was yet a chance of compromise. But he disliked exceedingly the idea of leaving Marie in the automobile on the road. He explained to his opponent the unreasonableness of his demand. He grew extravagant in his calculations of the value, in dollars and cents, of a new carriage-wheel.

He might as well have talked to the night. At last, in despair, he yielded, and Marie, with a little sob catching in her throat, yet not daring to utter a cry, saw his figure move away in silhouette against the glow from the farmer's lantern and then melt into the darkness.

With his departure it suddenly grew terribly chill, even huddled under the thick folds of the robe as she was. And it was lonely, with a loneliness that compressed her heart. She could feel it beating. So rapidly! She held her breath for very fear of something—she knew not what—which should pounce upon her out of the darkness. Then slowly, driven to boldness by her terror, she threw aside the covering and sat up, and gave a little cry.

Was there an echo? She imagined there was. And from behind her. A muffled exclamation in a bass voice. Terror gripped her so that her neck stiffened, and, aching to turn her head and face whatever it might be, she found herself fastened to the seat, as it were.

Then, suddenly, she heard the exclamation again; this time it was one of surprise. And it was followed by four good English words, dropped deliberately from the speaker's mouth, it seemed. "Well, I'll be damned!" said a deep voice.

Abruptly Marie regained the power of movement and turned her head. She looked through the glass front of the limousine, and she looked directly into the face of Mr. Mutchler, dimly outlined against the utter blackness of the interior of the car. He was staring at her, and astonishment was big in his eyes. For half-a-minute, which seemed ten times that space of time to each, they regarded each other. And all the while Marie was thinking very hard. This discovery was worse than all that had gone before. Now, for a certainty, was Louis undone. Oh, if she had not been such a coward and had remained hidden where she was! What should she say? What could she say?

Mr. Mutchler cut short her racing thoughts. The glazed front of the lim-

ousine was raised, and he leaned forward. "May I ask," he inquired in a voice which was a little more deliberate than even indignation demanded, "just who you are? Why have we stopped? And where is Brossard?"

Marie's ready tongue, for once, failed her, and she continued to stare at him in silence. He repeated his question and waited. This brought her ideas to a focus. She told what had happened as well as she could.

Mr. Mutchler began a wrathful reply, when, all at once, it occurred to him that, under the circumstances, his own lack of knowledge of these events was not adequately to be explained by the sleep natural to a man in normal condition. He subsided, and inquired how she came to be there.

Marie's answer was somewhat confused. In fact, it threw little light on the point. She stumbled and lost control of her English. Abruptly her nerves asserted themselves. She began to weep.

Mr. Mutchler, to say the least, was shocked. Then, whether it was because he was at heart a man of large sympathy or because he feared that a continuance of the tears would lead to hysterics, which would be still more awkward, he conceived a lively concern for the lonely situation of the occupant of the front seat. He inquired if she was not cold.

He spoke in a voice so paternal that Marie's tears gushed forth afresh in increased pity of herself, and with that Mr. Mutchler's inquiry became a statement. He spoke hurriedly. Brossard, he said, must be back in a very few minutes at the most; but, meanwhile, Marie would freeze to death where she was. She must come into the limousine at once. There was a foot-heater there, and— Mr. Mutchler never could quite recall what other arguments he employed. His one idea was to quiet the woman and lessen the chance of discovery by some passing driver, who would be sure to draw his own deductions from the situation.

Whatever the persuasion Mr. Mutchler used, Marie was won over, and, com-

ing into the limousine, seated herself on one of the little forward seats. There she sat stiffly, dabbling her cheeks with a handkerchief and saying not a word.

Nor was Mr. Mutchler more inclined to speech. No sooner was she in the car than a profuse perspiration broke out all over him, and he silently damned himself for a complete fool.

On the front seat Marie's presence, as he reflected, was damaging enough. But inside the limousine! Alone! With him! It was positively beyond explanation. If Mrs. Mutchler ever heard a whisper of this— His head fell back limply against the upholstery of the car.

He closed his eyes. His head throbbed, and from the cloud of possibilities which thronged his brain he was unable to pick out one which did not seem worse than all the others.

Marie, erect and silent, sat opposite, looking out of the window between the dabs from her pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. Mutchler was brought sharply to a sense of his immediate peril by an exclamation from his companion, and his eyes snapped open to catch a glint of light from up the road. It swayed and bobbed, and back of it moved back and forth two pairs of legs. Suddenly Mr. Mutchler knew it for what it was—a lantern carried by one of two men. And these men could be no other than Brossard and the owner of the vehicle returning from the squire's.

Mr. Mutchler's voice broke on the silence in a frantic whisper. "Bend down! Bend down, I say! Cover your head! They must not see you. Oh, be quick!"

From frequent practise Marie had become adept at this performance. Obediently she ducked her head and crouched in the corner, covering herself as well as she might with the laprobe which was pitched at her. She did not ask why she was to do this. She asked nothing. She simply disappeared from view.

Mr. Mutchler, because he could think of nothing better to do, closed his eyes and feigned his former state of

unconsciousness. But from beneath his eyelids he watched as well as he could, and he strained his ears to listen.

He saw the two men come up to the front of the car and halt. They seemed to be examining the broken axle of the wagon. Then they went to the side of the road and shortly came back, dragging something after them. For ten minutes afterward they were busy about the rear of the wagon. Mr. Mutchler gathered, from the few words he overheard, that they were fastening a fence-rail beneath the axle to take the place of the broken wheel. From occasional words, he understood that relations between the two men were decidedly strained. It seemed that the visit to the squire's had been productive of something very much to Brossard's distaste. The chauffeur grumbled, and uttered, now and then, what sounded very much like a French oath. The other man spoke only to give sharp orders.

Presently Brossard straightened up and stood with his hands on his hips. The other man had disappeared on the far side of the wagon. But in a moment the wagon drew ahead, and a voice came back: "Now, you there, you come along! And move mighty slow. No tricks, mind, or I'll change my mind, and thet there hell enjine a yourn'll stay in my stable all night—money er no money."

Mr. Mutchler heard Brossard grunt and swear again. But the chauffeur cranked the car, and got into the driver's seat. As he did so he glanced critically at the seat beside him, where the tumbled robe was heaped as Marie had left it, and Mr. Mutchler trembled. If Brossard should suspect that Marie was not still hidden by those folds, what might he not do? And the exposure which would follow—Mr. Mutchler uttered a little prayer.

It must have been effective. At least, Brossard set his eyes to the front, and the car started. It traveled slowly, as ordered. But even then, to keep behind the wagon, which dragged ahead just within the glare of the headlights, it had several times to come to a pause.

But by and by they turned off the road into a lane, and then halted in what appeared to be a farmyard. The man in the carriage got down and the leaves of a big door were swung back. The headlights illumined the interior of a wagon-shed. "Run yer machine in there. I reckon she'll be safe enough with th' doors shut and th' key in my pocket," the farmer said.

Brossard demurred, and attempted to argue the point. The farmer cut him short. "Thet's what y' want t' do, and y' want t' be mighty quick about it, too," he said. "When y' bring back thet money from old man Mutchler, it'll be time enough t' talk about th' rest. D' y' hear me?"

Brossard made no further remark, and the Panhard crossed the threshold and the engine came to a standstill. Simultaneously, Mr. Mutchler realized that a crisis was upon him.

Brossard sat motionless upon the seat and, as plainly as though it was himself who debated the point, Mr. Mutchler knew what was passing through his chauffeur's mind. The farmer did not know that there was any one in the car but the driver, and, to the best of Brossard's knowledge, Mr. Mutchler did not know that he shared the car with any one but his driver. Yet Brossard was faced with the dilemma of leaving the car shut up in this barn for an hour, perhaps longer, while he walked back to his employer's for a sum of money which he probably had no definite idea how he was to obtain when he arrived there. In the interval till his return it was more than likely, so Brossard reasoned, that Mr. Mutchler would come to a sense of his surroundings. If he did, what might not happen? Almost certainly there would be the discovery of Marie. And even if Mr. Mutchler remained quiescent there was but the smallest chance that Marie would consent to remain locked in that strange, dark place, to all intents and purposes alone.

In his keen appreciation of this predicament, Mr. Mutchler, if it had not been for his own peril, could almost

have felt sorry for his helpless chauffeur. As it was, their destinies seemed to be interwoven. In his anxiety he leaned forward, and, grasping Marie's arm, in an effort to insure her silence, pressed his face against the glass front of the limousine.

At that instant it must have been that Brossard came to a heroic decision, for he bent over and laid a hand upon the heaped-up robe in the seat beside him. Into its folds his fingers sank, then, with a sudden fling, he threw them aside. Immediately he gave a cry.

But Mr. Mutchler had foreseen something of the kind. He raised the glass ever so slightly. "Brossard," he whispered—"Brossard, she is in here. With me! Safe! Say nothing!"

From the doorway the farmer called out: "What's that?"

There was an instant's pause. But Brossard was equal to the demand. "My shout, you mean?" he answered. "It was nossing. I touch ze battery wire."

His arm slipped beneath the glass and found Marie's hand. Her fingers gave back a reassuring pressure.

Mr. Mutchler's brain, now all inven-

tion, found the solution to what he conceived to be the only further difficulty. From his pocket he drew a roll of bills and thrust them into Brossard's grasp. "Pay him. Get us out of this. Quick!" he commanded.

But Brossard hesitated. His own brain had become suddenly productive. It was borne upon him that Mr. Mutchler's situation was just a shade more parlous than his own. "But, monsieur!" he whispered, with tantalizing slowness. "Marie? How come she in zere? We are to be married. I must know."

Mr. Mutchler was stopping at nothing. Every moment of delay was fraught with danger. "Never mind now!" he begged. "Pay that man, and get away. She will tell you everything—afterward."

Still Brossard hesitated. The whip-hand was not often his.

"And if we marry—" he began. From the doorway the farmer called.

"Yes, yes," declared Mr. Mutchler. "I will raise your pay—anything."

"Ha!" cried Brossard.

"What's that?" called the farmer.

"Nossing!" responded Brossard. "I touch ze wire again!"



MADRIGAL

O LITTLE breeze that stirs
The petals of the rose
To tremble and uncloze,
And with the bee confers
On ways to steal her sweet,
Send me the wisdom meet
For joy's interpreters—
O little breeze!

O little Love, who stirs
The portals of a heart
To quiver and to part,
And with your pinion blurs
All dreams that went before:
Whisper to me your lore,
That all my joy be hers—
O little Love!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

SOCIETY AS A MERRY-GO-ROUND

BY MARY MANNERS



THE EASILY DIVORCED



CONTEMPORARY marriage," says Mr. E. S. Martin, in one of his essays, "is a bourne from which travelers return with an audacity many persons regard as not

a little scandalous."

Well, it *is* audacious to disunite yourself from your fellow yokebearer, leaving him or her stuck beside the plow—for even in this age of individual irresponsibility *somebody* is supposed to stay by the plow—while you go capering through the world in search of greener fields or newer pastures; but of the many persons who regard such performances as "not a little scandalous," very few of them will carry their general and perfectly proper disapproval far enough to take action in any particular instance. Society, nowadays, is not greatly concerned. If the lady or gentleman who has just been divorced yet retains the quality that originally contributed to the great game of Amusement, which is carried on night and day, that lady or gentleman may still come and play.

"We don't know what you have been doing outside there," society says, "and, beyond gratifying a little natural curiosity, you need not be too precise about telling us. You are good-looking and young"—or "good-natured and rich," or "a good sport and companionable"—"and as long as you do not utterly upset *our* easy, conventional standards while you are among us, you may behave yourself elsewhere according to your own. We do not consider it our business to judge you."

This is callous, to a certain extent, but the attitude of non-judgment—after all, "There but for the grace of God, goes"—any one of us!—of non-interference, of placidly taking and making the best of things as they are, is essentially characteristic of the American-crowd spirit.

If the crowd would condemn at the right time, doubtless many abuses would be corrected before they could gain headway.

If, in society, the people who can afford themselves the best in the way of gayety, ease, luxury, refinement, had always the strictest ideas of good taste and the sternest code of morals, they might discredit certain sorts of conduct, and any sort they set their faces against would be gradually discontinued—that is, among their own especial set and those who aspire to it. But in truth it bothers them to be too straitlaced.

There is the story of a little girl who, being visited by one of the "tantrums" common to all children, screamed for the better part of an hour, and then, putting her head round the corner of the door, said, piteously: "Why doesn't somebody make me stop?"

It would seem as if that were the matter with a great many of the disaffected couples of the day. They have got into "tantrums," and nobody will make them stop. This does not apply to the people with real grievances—the man who has married an evilly-disposed woman, or the woman who finds herself tied for life to a drunkard or a bully—but to those who separate for light and trivial reasons. And, alas! there are getting to be many of them! Selfish, careless, inconsider-

ate, irresponsible—what sort of example are they setting for the next generation to follow?

Felicia Ambergilt, always having been indulged by her parents, at the ripe age of eighteen announces that she has selected a partner for life, one Sanders Templeton. There is nothing particular to be said against the young man, neither is there anything particular to be said for him, except that he has a good seat on a horse and a good figure for a coat. Felicia, being opposed, develops a temper—injured feelings, fits of brooding silence; in every way known to spoiled girlhood she makes the household suffer for attempting to thwart her. She does not think she is behaving badly. She believes, honestly, that she is a martyr. Sanders—stamped with the admiration of young feminine friends—Sanders loves her, and she loves Sanders. What right has anybody to interfere between them?

Her mother may look upon the affair as a "passing infatuation." The idea is offensive, but she must bear it. Her father may call him a "tailor's block." She knows her own mind, and she *likes* that kind of man!

Wait? Why should they wait? Except to be made unhappy! Change? How little she is understood by anyone who imagines she *could* change! They may take her away. Oh, yes! But it will make no difference in her feelings!

And as she is determined that it shan't, it doesn't. Palm Beach is as a desert; London and Paris dead cities peopled by shades. She droops. Her parents yield. She returns and marries Sanders in triumph.

They have rather more money than they need, and they start off with an agreeable blare of trumpets. Sanders, amiable, unambitious dandy, settles down into a pretty good sort of husband as husbands go. He is a bit dull, perhaps, but then, to the unprejudiced mind, he always was dull. However, it may be allowed that the mysterious dullness of a smart-looking young bachelor is very different from the plain, open, everyday dullness of the

man you have married. And that is what he speedily becomes to Felicia—just "the man she has married."

She herself is only a little clever, and not at all wise. She is restless, excitable, pleasure-loving, trouble-shirking; frankly uninterested in anything that does not in some way minister to her amusement or her vanity. She is pretty and likes to be flattered. Sanders' flattery has become as tiresome as a story of which one knows the point. She is light-minded and intolerant of the very word "duty." Maternity comes as a surprise and a horror to her. How *is* she to endure it?

That is the missing keystone to the whole structure of her character. She has never been taught how to endure anything. She has been shielded from the serious things of life. Responsibility, anxiety, pain, have been kept from her, as far as it was possible to keep them. She has never been brought face to face with the necessity of sacrificing self in any way to anyone. Real love might have made a woman of her; but she is only capable of an "infatuation," and the "infatuation" is over. Why should she stick to her bargain? She made it when she thought she cared for Sanders. Now she finds she does not care. He bores her. She has never permitted herself to be bored or troubled. Why should she now?

If society should say to her: "Here! This isn't fair, and we won't stand for it. Your husband has done nothing amiss. If you are bored, it is your own fault; and, since it comes to that, who are you that you shouldn't be bored? You *would* marry Sanders. Now you may just stay with him and make him as happy as you can. If you don't, we drop you."

Or if Sanders should pluck up a little spirit and, exclaiming: "Very well, if you leave me you shall have good cause for it!" beat her soundly, it might have a salutary effect; if not upon her, then upon the next lady who contemplated like conduct in a like case.

But it does not occur to society to admonish her, or to Sanders to beat her.

She divorces him—on the ground of incompatibility of temper, or what not—as triumphantly as she married him, and leaves him—a good deal depressed and puzzled—with the child, of whom, as she justly observes, he was always fonder than she.

Presently it appears that there is a gentleman lurking in the background who has fallen in love with her pretty, petulant face, and is going to try his luck at not boring her.

Perhaps for a time all goes well. He has position, money, cultivated tastes, a pleasant disposition. She is going to be thoroughly happy at last, so she tells herself and everybody who will listen. And while the novelty endures, she is; as happy as to be constantly amused and pleased can make her. Then the old spirit of unrest comes back. Her husband has occupations. She has none. Her house runs itself, as, indeed, why should it not, with the best trained servants to attend to every detail? Dressing, which she does tastefully, becomingly and extravagantly, is a very natural resource, but it leaves many unemployed hours which even multitudinous social engagements cannot fill. She does not care for reading. It never suggests itself to her to enter into the interests of other people. The give and take of good comradeship, the first principles of the art of being companionable, are unknown to her.

Sanders, poor fellow, was crazy about horses, and loved a country life. Once or twice before they were married Miss Ambergilt rode with Mr. Templeton, and professed at least a tolerance for rural scenes; but never afterward! He took some pleasure in a small hunting box he owned on Long Island. She never set foot in the place. He was perhaps a little vain—which of us would not be?—of his prowess in the field. She never disguised her entire indifference to any of his adventures and achievements. She was not in the least thrilled by his account of how the mare took the five-barred fence by the schoolhouse corners; why pretend to be? And as for pottering about the country with him, as he used occasion-

ally to suggest, she could not imagine anything more tiresome!

Her present husband, Mr. Wilkes Barry, being a more self-reliant person, suffers hardly at all when he finds that her sympathies extend very little beyond herself and her social surroundings. He yielded to a "passing infatuation" when he married her, and he is beginning to know it. She is not in any way a suitable wife for him. He realizes it with a little grin of cynical amusement at his own expense. She always had a frivolous disposition and a pretty face. She has still a pretty face and a frivolous disposition. Why complain? He goes about his business and doesn't. She has none to go about and does. Wilkes neglects her, she thinks to herself, bitterly. It is a shock and a surprise to her to find that she can think it. She has always been the one to neglect, if there were any sort of neglecting to be done; to avoid undue demonstration, to put aside burdensome affection. The present situation is incomprehensible to her.

Wilkes, greatly absorbed by far-reaching business schemes, by scientific interests, by musical enthusiasms, has, in fact, come to regard her as an attractive doll of expensive and insufficient mechanism, which he can take out and play with when he happens to have time. When he first brought the doll home—a period he looks back upon with grim astonishment—he *made* more time to play with it than he does now. But then he thought it was going to prove more of a woman than it has turned out. He is disappointed; but a wise man puts the best countenance he may upon his disappointments, especially those he has brought upon himself.

Felicia, too, is disappointed and unhappy. She does not know what she wants, but she wants it very badly. If she were told the true cause of her discontent—lack of ability to love anyone better than herself, lack of opportunity for the good, wholesome household work of women, lack of the primal hunger of motherhood, lack of everything, in fact, but the desire to flit but-

terfly-like from pleasure to pleasure in a sunburst of gratified vanity—if she were told this, it would almost equally amuse and disgust her. There is something just a tiny bit indecent—like taking one's bath before people—in bringing the attitude of a "good wife and mother" woman into the surroundings of a fashionable and frivolous little lady. As for pleasure, most of the things she "has to do"—that go by that name—"bore her extremely." No; the trouble is that "Wilkes neglects her." That is her grievance, and she does not propose to put up with it lightly.

In her ridiculous little apology for a heart she likes him still as much as she can like anybody, but that does not prevent her from—indeed, it rather urges her on to—very pronounced flirtations with other men. By and by one of them reaches a point where Wilkes is obliged to take notice of it. He remonstrates in an insufferable, elderly-brotherly way. If he would only be jealous; only show her that she had a hold upon his affection! Sanders would have done that, at least—poor, stupid Sanders! He would not have scrupled to cry out when he was hurt. Wilkes won't be hurt. That is, he refuses to acknowledge it if he is. The power to hurt him seems the most precious thing to be obtained now. And she obtains it. Things go—apparently—too far, and Mr. Barry, without taking the trouble to inquire into the rights and wrongs of the situation, signifies to her politely but relentlessly that he intends to extricate himself from it.

A little pity and patience on his part would have saved her happiness, just as a little pity and patience on her part would have saved Sanders. Now they are none of them happy, but the men are better off than she. Sanders has his child, whom he regards as the most wonderful creature in the whole world; Wilkes has his life interests, and they are centered in large things. She has nothing but her frills and her feathers and her failures.

A mother without a child; a wife without a husband; a woman without a reputation. A poor, bruised butterfly

upon whose wings the sun will not shine any more. If this were another divorce, by which she might again—without controversy—escape the discomforts of an awkward position and return to her own with her former air of spoiled-child confidence, and, perhaps, a Western millionaire in tow, society would not be disinclined to give her another chance. But this calm, cold, silent separation, this "arrangement" by which she is—unaccused—put aside by her husband, set apart from him in an establishment of her own, where she may do as she pleases, makes them look askance. If he had blamed her openly, there would not have been wanting some few to defend her, but against silence, who can contend? Nothing that Wilkes could have done, if he had meant to be vindictive, could have hurt her more in the eyes of the world. As a matter of fact, he has not meant to be vindictive. He has just determinedly freed himself from the consequences of a mistake. It has not occurred to him to study the situation and see if there were no way of turning the mistake to an advantage—for both of them. An excuse for taking his liberty was offered to him, and he took it. He feels he has been long-suffering not to have grasped at it before. He has not tried to divorce her. He has just let her go. Why on earth should he not? Why should he hold to such an unequal bargain? Her side does not present itself to him, any more than Sanders' did to her. Each is more important to self than anyone else is to either.

So they are separated. To Felicia's little house, described as a "bijou residence" by the real estate people, a few of her especial friends still make a habit of coming, but society does not court her any more, because it is supporting Mr. Barry, and bitterly does she feel the difference. She was never a woman of intrinsic importance, and now that the brilliancy of her surroundings has paled, she, too, has lost color. Nobody means to be unkind, but she is not eligible for the game now, it seems. There is that mysterious "something against

her" that can be neither proved nor disproved. Those who could forgive her for her indifference to Sanders cannot forgive her for Wilkes' indifference to her. Success, no matter—or *almost* no matter—how obtained, the world applauds, and failure, no matter—or again *almost* no matter—how undeserved, it condemns. And, after all, Felicia's failure has not been quite undeserved. Only, people made excuses for her in the days of her prosperity that they do not feel the necessity of making now. Society has begun to condemn her—rather late in the day, and when it can only do harm.

At first she makes the mistake of clinging to the hands that are—as gracefully as possible—being withdrawn. Then she succumbs and gradually disappears. Her former intimates hear of her in Paris and London. "Very much painted, they say, my dear—a pity to begin it at her age—but beautifully dressed, and very much 'in' with a second-rate set of rather fast people. I suppose she always was a little that way inclined."

Gossip from Rome one winter represents a little Italian prince as going more or less picturesquely to the dogs on her account; gossip from Monte Carlo in the spring credits a Russian grand duke with being much in her company and backing her play.

The truth is that, parted from the last anchor of old association—restless, lonely, reckless—she ran away some time ago with a young Frenchman of recognized fascination and no character, who deserted her as soon as he tired of her—which was pitifully soon—and that she is now dying of consumption in an out-of-the-way little village in Switzerland. Friends she has none

that could be summoned within two weeks or so, and she asks herself which one of them could be depended upon to come if she cared to send. The people of the house are good to her. The priest comes to see her now and again. She does not talk of any past to him. She is not repentant. She feels herself more sinned against than sinning, but she is rather glad her parents are not alive to be distressed by the pass to which fate has brought her. She feels that she has been hardly treated, that she is ill and wretched, that a variety of people are to blame for it, and that nothing on earth could be so satisfying as to get back to the world—her particular world—restored to health, beauty, riches, position, in some miraculous way, and show its denizens what she thought of them. Next to that, she sometimes imagines, oddly enough, that it would be good to see Sanders and the boy for a little while. Sanders always admired her, and to have somebody big and strong and not *too* brilliant near her would be a comfort just now. And then she really would like to see how the boy has turned out. Her boy! How funny it seems to think that she really has a boy, and *two* husbands, on the other side of the world, and to be all alone here in the Swiss Alps. She wonders whether Wilkes ever thinks of her. She has come to the conclusion that Wilkes was about the most selfish man she ever knew. Everything bad that has happened to her has been owing to him—beyond a doubt. When she gets better she will write and tell him so.

But she never does.

And the gospel of self first and the rest of the world anywhere, still seems to obtain among our young people.





THE LADY AND THE HANDICAPPER

By P. S. CARLSON



THE lady driving along the white suburban road in her trim dog-cart, a liveried groom by her side, reined up suddenly. She was at a point in the boulevard where she could look into the enclosure of a race-course—the old Quantico track, now being reconstructed for a meeting a few weeks later.

Sitting erect, with reins drawn tautly, the stately girl with the auburn hair done up in a mass at the back of her head showed pleasure at the evidences of improvement inside the high board-fence. From where she sat, restraining her impatient bay, she could watch workmen away on the other side refitting and repainting the immense grand stand. Others were employed in repairing the broken fence, leveling the green lawn in front of the stand, scraping the track, and enlarging the clubhouse.

"It will look better than it ever did," she told herself. "I wish grandfather—"

Then she gave a chirrup to the horse, and the cart moved rapidly down the road. Presently she reached the entrance to the course.

The double gates were open to the driveway inside, but a man stood guard.

"You can't go in, miss. Nobody allowed in here," he said, as the girl turned the horse's head in toward the place.

Her reply was a sharp cut of the whip on the bay's sleek side, supplemented with "Get up, Diomed!"

As the horse sprang forward the front wheel of the cart grazed the watchman's shoulder. The lady deigned not to notice the escape, but sat with compressed lips, guiding the animal down the drive at a rapid trot.

"Well, she got in, all right," muttered the guardian, following her with admiring eyes. "Did you see that, Curly?" he called to a companion. "Almost drove over me! She's all right, she is. Do you know her?"

"That's Miss Constance Carryl," was the grinning answer. "Her grandfather started the track. I guess Clarkson won't kick at her slipping by you. Her grandfather made his father superintendent of the place."

Down in the shade of the big grand stand the lady was standing in the lush grass, talking quietly with a short, stout, bearded man, old enough to be her father. He was Clarkson, the superintendent of the grounds. Near by was the groom, holding the horse by the head.

A close inspection would have showed that Miss Carryl was rather more than a débutante, perhaps twenty-seven or eight. Her face was of a strong type of beauty, though without a trace of coarseness. The features were of the Grecian mold, and her complexion was, if anything, too coldly white. It was the kind which goes with a head of glorious autumn-tinted tresses. Her eyes

gave a touch of warmth to her expression. As she talked, their steely blueness flashed like clear spaces of starlighted ice in a polar expanse of snow. These big, changing violet eyes were her chief charm. Without them she would have seemed too inanimate.

While Miss Carryl's figure was tall and slim, it was by no means angular. She stood beautifully erect, and her movements were graceful.

"Mother and I were in Paris when a friend wrote me that Quantico was to have a new lease of life, Mr. Clarkson," the lady said. "I was delighted to hear it. I only wish grandfather could have lived to see it."

Her own father had died when she was very young, and her grandfather, old Colonel Evan Carryl, whose disposition she possessed to a marked degree, had educated her.

"It was a rare thing that Trainer Sutton entered Strephon for the Quantico Cup," she continued. "The colt was a good two-year-old, and at the beginning of this season I received some glowing accounts regarding him. He won a stake race of some account at Westchester, did he not?"

"A mile handicap, and in record time, too," was Clarkson's reply. "He's a little horse, Miss Constance, and can't carry much weight, but there's none gamer. If the handicapper doesn't load him down in the Quantico, he ought to stand a good show of winning. The weights haven't been announced as yet."

"I do so wish the little horse could win the cup, Mr. Clarkson," continued the lady with animation. "You know what it would mean to—to me."

Her eyes were sparkling now, and she switched the long gauntlets in her hand nervously.

"Any other good horses entered in the race?" she queried suddenly.

"Lucien Lamar has his crack Sikh in. He was a great three-year-old last season in the East—beat nearly everything he went against. Mr. Lamar believes the cup is his already, I hear," he chuckled.

The lady's eyes grew hard and cold,

her brows knitted. Plainly she was not pleased.

"And, by the way, Miss Constance"—the superintendent's eyes were bent upon her keenly now—"have you heard that Mr. Horace Lamar has been appointed the official handicapper for the meetings at this course?"

Miss Carryl seemed more than surprised. Apparently she was startled at the news. A flush of—was it annoyance?—swept over her face. She dropped her eyes and stood silent for a little.

"Why, no, I had heard nothing of that," she admitted. "You see, we have just returned home from abroad."

Then, in a lower tone, as if to herself:

"Horace Lamar the handicapper!"

Again a wave of crimson rippled over her cheek.

"He held some sort of secretaryship with the Eastern racing associations, Miss Constance, as, of course, you knew before. Last winter the official handicapper was taken ill, and Mr. Horace filled his place temporarily. This spring in the big handicaps, the weights of which were assigned by him, there were such close finishes between such a large number of horses, that everybody talked about it. When the regular official recovered and it was decided to open Quantico, Mr. Horace was appointed here. They say he knows a lot about the form of horses."

Miss Carryl did not reply for a brief interval. Moreover, she kept her face averted from the eyes of her informant.

"You will have a pretty place here when it is completed," she said, and made a move as if to regain her seat in the cart. Then, checking herself and facing the superintendent, she inquired casually:

"Mr. Horace Lamar is at home now, I suppose? Is his office at the Jockey Club headquarters?"

Still looking at her with a curious, half-smiling countenance, the superintendent gave her the address.

"Mr. Lamar and I are old friends,

Mr. Clarkson," she said, a little awkwardly. "After a stay abroad one likes to meet old friends again, you know. Thank you so much for your information."

In another moment she had settled herself in the elevated seat, the groom had clambered up beside her, and they were spinning out of the enclosure.

Clarkson stood watching her down the road, with an amused look on his face.

"It was a piece of news to her, I'll be bound," he muttered. "I'll bet she's planning now how she'll persuade Mr. Horace Lamar, the old friend, to hoodwink Mr. Horace Lamar, the handicapper, so her little horse can capture that cup. I don't blame her a bit, not a particle, if she can gain her end—under the circumstances."

The "circumstances" were rather out of the ordinary.

The old track, located in the suburbs of a city of more than half a million inhabitants, years before had been the scene of some of the hardest fought and most important turf contests of the country. That had been in antebellum times. After the war the sport had been allowed to languish. The Racing Association had constructed other tracks nearer the metropolis, which had absorbed all the dates, save the semi-occasional meetings of hunt club associations, which had two or three days' racing of inferior thoroughbreds, attended by society more from sympathy than anything else.

Time and time again influential men of the city and vicinity had clamored for dates for Quantico, but the association had hitherto proven obdurate.

Now that dates had been allotted, the aristocratic suburbanites who dwelt in the vicinity of Quantico wondered what would be the outcome in a certain direction. And while they wondered, they speculated, and were spitefully delighted, that there would be evolved a new phase of the old Carryl-Lamar feud.

To explain the feud, it is necessary to go back some years. The Carryls and the Lamars, be it understood, were

among the "first families" of their native State. At the outset the scions of the two families had stood together for their common good against invaders and interlopers, and very good friends they had been. This state of affairs lasted until the representatives of each family had become interested in the breeding of thoroughbred horses.

Men of weight and affairs in their State, the Carryls and Lamars had been able to influence legislation so that regular racing was made possible in spite of the opposition of the church element. At the outset, Quantico had been constructed and owned by them jointly.

The course flourished from the start. It was but a season or two after its inception that racing fixtures, or "classic" events, were established.

These race "fixtures" are permanent institutions, and mean as much to the turfites as the Fourth of July does to the patriot. They are particular races, renewed year after year and occurring on the same date, or as near it as possible.

One of the "fixtures" at the old racecourse was the "Quantico Cup," then a two-mile race. It was this which had aroused the feud between the Carryls and Lamars, and which had created factions throughout the State.

Colonel Evan Carryl had been nominated for governor, much against the wishes of the Lamars. It was only natural that they did not want him to be the choice of the party by nomination, which in those days was almost equivalent to election, when Major Julian Lamar, the head of his house, wanted to be the nominee of the same party. It was a bitterly waged convention battle, and it had been decided in favor of Carryl—by unfair means, the Lamars considered. The nomination was received by one vote only, and Colonel Carryl had won over a refractory delegate by the gift of the most promising yearling in the Carryl barn.

Some time after, the Quantico Cup race was to be decided. Only three horses were in it. One was Carryl's, another Lamar's, and the third—which did not count—was owned by an ambi-

tious horseman of another State. The prospective governor did not see how his horse could lose; Lamar was equally certain regarding his own. It is a matter of turf history how the despised outsider won the race by a good margin.

Both Colonel Carryl and Major Lamar were furious. The only thing left for them to do was to vent their rage on each other, since the race had apparently been won fairly enough. On their meeting in the paddock, just after the race had been run, the two owners began accusing each other of conspiring with the outsider—as he knew his own horse had no chance, etc.—to defeat the other. A volley of random “By gad, sirs,” to get the range, had led to an exchange of hot shot which had hastened all non-combatants from the scene. At the conclusion of hostilities, or, rather, the beginning, a challenge had been tendered and accepted.

The duel was fought, and Carryl was shot through the shoulder. Such an ugly wound it proved that the colonel was forced to keep out of the campaign in consequence, and his opponent was elected governor by a majority so small it might have been wiped out, both sides agreed, by one comprehensive sweep of the colonel’s arm in a stump speech, had he been able to deliver one.

Major Lamar was held responsible for the result of the election, which was doing him an injustice. Like his jockey colors, the major was “true blue.” The only way in which he had served to defeat the colonel was by plugging him at the first shot with his Derringer.

Although the Quantico Cup had been contested for season after season for many years, it was a trick of fate, or possibly simple perversity of luck, that though the Carryls and the Lamars had representatives entered in each renewal, neither ever won the event.

The original Major Lamar had died many years before, leaving two sons. One of these, Horace’s father, had died when the boy was about twelve years old. Horace’s uncle, more like the original Julian Lamar than Horace, Sr., was a crusty bachelor, who still persisted in believing that of all human

beings in this world—their locations would be in juxtaposition in the next, thank God!—the Carryls were the ones most to be shunned.

Horace lived with his uncle at the latter’s magnificent country-place and breeding-farm. When the old man should die, it was expected that the nephew would be his heir. The old ex-senator was very fond of his nephew.

Horace Lamar and Constance Carryl’s only brother had been at college together, and had been excellent friends. When young Carryl had contracted a disease which had proved fatal, Horace Lamar had been more than kind. Miss Carryl’s natural antipathy to anything that bore the name instituted in her by her grandfather had been done away with completely.

It was even rumored that Constance and young Lamar were engaged. Horace’s visits to Tanager Farm, the handsome estate of the Carryls, were frequent. Often the two were seen riding or driving together.

Then the intimacy ceased. The Carryls, mother and daughter, had closed the house and gone abroad. Horace Lamar, so his friends said, appeared dejected, though he gave no reason. Had Miss Carryl, not unmindful of the old family disagreement, enacted the rôle of Lorelei and lured him on to destruction at her shapely feet? Society made up its mind this was the case.

Whatever had been the cause of separation, evidently Miss Carryl herself did not think it too serious to be overcome.

This same summer afternoon, on leaving the Quantico race-course, she drove straight to the city, and, ascending the elevator in a big office building, was ushered into a room on whose glass doors was the sign “Quantico Jockey Club.” Only an attendant was in the reception-room, from which doors led into inner offices.

Yes, Mr. Horace Lamar was in. “Your card or name, please?”

“Just tell him that a lady wishes to see him, on—er—a purely business matter,” she said.

It seemed a long time that she waited for a reply.

At last he came. She saw his face before he realized who was his visitor, and noted that he wore a preoccupied air. A man of thirty years, of tall figure, straight and lithe, with dark hair and eyes, a frank, handsome face, full of character, he looked older than his years. Then he had recognized her!

"Why, Miss Carryl! you here?" was his cry of glad surprise. "I thought you were in England, or abroad somewhere."

Something more he murmured about "unexpected pleasure," and the other conventional phrases which come to one's lips. His hand clasped hers warmly, his eyes were eager and inquiring.

Miss Carryl said but little, chatting calmly about her trip in a rather indefinite way.

"I had no idea it was you. I should not have kept you waiting a minute, you know," he said, somewhat reproachfully. "Will you come into my own office? It is more private and more comfortable than outside here. We can converse together more—unreservedly."

His manner was a trifle constrained. Still, she could not blame him for being a little flurried, she reflected, as she followed him into his office. When a woman tells her admirer she will send for him to give him her final answer and fails to do so, naturally he should feel constraint at their first meeting months afterward. She seated herself by the window in an armchair, while he drew up his own from a roll-top desk on which were sheets of paper covered with rows of figures and some racing books.

For a moment they looked at one another. He was the first to break the silence.

"You did not send for me. You made up your mind you would come yourself, Constance. It was that, was it not?" he queried.

His voice trembled a little. He would have taken her hand, but she withdrew it quickly.

"Please, please do not refer to what has gone before, Mr. Lamar."

Her voice was more pleading than condemning. She seemed to feel pity for him, at least.

"Let us not talk of the past at all, I beg of you," she began hurriedly. "Of the present—the future, rather, for that is what has caused this visit. But first will you let me have a glass of water? The weather is frightfully warm. I think we shall go direct to the seashore."

Lamar's face showed his disappointment at the manner in which she had received his words. However, he brought the water and watched her drink it slowly.

Leaning forward until his face was on a level with her own, he said passionately:

"Miss Carryl—Connie—do you mean to tell me that you have come here just to awaken the old love, without giving aught in return? Is your visit simply to determine whether you still retain the same hold upon my affections? If it is, you can see for yourself," he ended bitterly.

He had half risen from his chair in his agitation. So wrought up was he that he did not notice what one less concerned might have perceived. The lady's eyes were so full of pity, perhaps more than pity, that she had lowered them. Her bosom was heaving so that she could hide it only with strong effort, and, as a woman invariably will when she wishes to conceal emotion, she lifted one white hand to her head and adjusted, or feigned to adjust, the lace veil on her dainty summer bonnet.

She made as if to speak, then checked herself, biting her lip. Finally she began clearly and calmly:

"I wish to discuss a subject in which I know we are both intensely interested—the Quantico Cup, Mr. Lamar."

And then, her composure fully restored, she said coldly:

"I beg of you not to begin all that over again, and ascribe motives to me which—which are entirely foreign to

my nature. I assure you you do not know how it distresses me. Will you please talk rationally with me about the cup race?"

Lamar sighed acquiescence, muttering something about the impossibility of acting the part of a rational being so long as she drove him to distraction by her heartlessness.

"I shall be glad to inform you all that I can about the Quantico, Miss Carryl," he vouchsafed. "What particular point do you wish me to elucidate?"

"You see, having just come from the other side, I have heard practically nothing about the prospects of the race. I suppose, of course, you know that I have my pet thoroughbred, Strephon, entered in it?"

She leaned an elbow on the table, placed her chin in the palm of her hand, and regarded him serenely.

"I was aware of that, Miss Carryl," he replied. "And what, then?"

"And also, of course, that your uncle, Mr. Lucien Lamar, has his horse in it?"

The young man frowned.

"Naturally, I am fully posted regarding that, Miss Carryl, when I have been made the handicapper. Perhaps you had not been so informed?"

He looked at her keenly. Her expression was as enigmatical as the Sphinx. A dark suspicion flashed through his mind for an instant as he surveyed the placid, smiling countenance of the girl, but it was banished as quickly. When she spoke, she ignored his question.

"With a representative from the Lamar stable and one from the Carryl, it will be quite like old times, will it not?" she said softly.

Her smile was bewitching, her eyes warm and friendly. She continued:

"Perhaps the hard-luck hoodoo which has attended the running of the cup for both will at last be put to flight. Who knows but that the fact that a poor lone female has her horse in it this time will have that effect?"

She laughed, her eyes watching him narrowly.

Was she in jest or earnest? Lamar was puzzled. More than that, he felt strangely disquieted. He could not understand her.

"Let us hope so, Miss Carryl," he said shortly.

"Yes, just suppose that it should be possible for me to win? Why, my dead and buried forebears who struggled so hard for the prize would rise up in their graves and call me blessed!"

His eyes were studying her intently. The frown had not left his face. It seemed to have become more pronounced.

"Really, Miss Carryl——" he began; then stopped for a moment and drew his breath sharply. "Of course as an official of the Jockey Club, I must be entirely impartial, no matter how much I should like to throw my influence in any direction."

"Have you seen my horse Strephon, Mr. Lamar?" she interrupted. "He is a great racer for such a——" she hesitated a trifle, "such a little fellow. I believe it is generally known that he is no weight-carrier. I slipped down to the training-quarters yesterday to take a look at him. I was surprised that he had not developed more. You see how great an interest I take in the race;" she smiled sweetly.

A long pause ensued. The lady appeared to be pondering deeply.

"I suppose there are a number of good horses in the race besides that of your uncle?" she queried. Nothing in her voice or her face hinted at a subtle reason for touching on this point.

Lamar made some remark about there being an unusually good showing in the entry-list, and broke off abruptly.

The lady rose, as if to go, but he put a detaining hand on her arm.

"Do not leave with the impression that I wouldn't do anything in the matter to assist you if I could honorably, Miss Carryl—since you will not let me call you by a more informal name," he said sadly. "Will you allow me to explain?"

She seemed a little discomfited.

"I am surprised that you should deem

any explanation necessary," she said quickly. "Of course I am no racing expert, but I will be glad to listen to any pointers you may give me. Proceed; I am listening."

"As I said, the position which I have been tendered is that of handicapper. He is the one who makes the race a contest, instead of a walkover. In every race some horses are superior to others in the matter of speed and stamina. That is bound to be the case. In a handicap such as this cup race has been made, where horses of all ages are pitted against one another, there must be an adjustment of weights to bring them together. Here, I will illustrate my meaning."

As she watched he took a paper-weight from his desk and rolled up a sheet of paper into a little ball.

Holding one in each hand, at an equal distance above the floor, he let them drop on the carpet.

"Of course the paper-weight, being the heavier, reached the carpet first," he explained. "The paper-weight we will let represent a fast horse, the paper a slow one. The reason the heavier struck the floor first was that it possessed the greater gravity, or speed, we will say, in that direction. Suppose I tied something of equal weight to the paper—then it would go as fast as the other, would it not?"

She nodded.

"Well, that's just the opposite theory from handicapping racers, but it will illustrate. Instead of being able to make a slow horse go faster, all I can do is to make a fast horse go slower. What I am supposed to do is to begin with the fastest horse in the race at the distance, and put weight on him so that his speed will be diminished and he will pass the finish line on even terms with the least speedy animal. Each horse must carry a certain amount of weight, to which there is a limit, greater or lesser. The weight on each must be calculated so that, theoretically at least, all the horses will finish with their noses together at the finish line. That practically would be an impossibility. All we can do is to have

the leaders finish close together, and we are satisfied."

She had listened intently.

"You see, horsemen are extremely clever at figuring out the weights themselves, and can tell almost to the fractional part of a pound what a horse should carry," he continued.

"You are certainly a most clever exponent of your profession, Mr. Lamar," she said, rising, and adding: "You have been very kind in explaining the theory. We will see how it works out in practise—the race itself. But I must say adieu."

"You are not going away with the impression that I would not do anything in my power to aid you?" he entreated, rising and standing before her. "Rather than have you think that I would not assist you in any honorable way, I shall transfer the work of affixing the weights for the Quantico Cup to some one else."

"You really need not take the trouble, Mr. Lamar. If you should do such a thing, I should feel in duty bound to withdraw my horse."

She was smiling sweetly now.

"I do not think it would be betraying a trust to tell you something about your horse that you may not know," he said quietly. "I have watched his running very closely of late, as well as the performances of other racers with which I may have to deal. Strephon, I have noticed, has a tendency to run out at the head of the home-stretch, to take his corners wide, thereby losing ground which is hard to regain at a point so near the finish. I should advise you to employ a strong, clever jockey to pilot him in the cup race. I would suggest Roemer, Miss Carryl."

"Thank you so much," she said carelessly.

"I may tell you also that, while there are some good horses in the race, Strephon, in my opinion, stands out with two others as the best."

"One of the three is Sikh, your uncle's representative, Mr. Lamar?" she asked a little wickedly.

"Miss Carryl, depend upon it there will be no partiality. Given a fine day

and a good track, you will see a horse-race worth witnessing. Will you not grant me the privilege of calling on you at Tanager Farm, as formerly?" he asked, coming closer and speaking earnestly.

For a moment her eyes dropped, and then:

"You are so busy now, I fear it would spoil your calculations regarding the horses. Besides"—her face had taken on an expression of deep gravity—"might not visits at this time be misconstrued in case my horse should win the cup?"

"Miss Carryl—Constance—do not be so childish. At least tell me that I can call after the race has been decided."

"We shall have left for the seashore then," she murmured, without letting her eyes meet his. Instead, they sought the chatelaine which she held before them. "So late!" she exclaimed, with pretended surprise. "I have been here much longer than I expected. And I promised to give the Honorable Algy a try at tennis this afternoon!"

Lamar's face darkened.

"So the Honorable Algy Beaton has seen fit to follow you across the ocean," he muttered despairingly.

"What nonsense you are talking!" she laughed. "He and I are simply old friends, that is all. Good-by."

She extended her hand, he shook it mechanically, and she departed, leaving him staring after her in a dazed, perplexed state.

"Could she have come here with the intention of influencing me to throw the race to her?" he questioned himself. "No, no, I cannot, will not, believe it of her. And yet—"

No more auspicious day for the running of the Quantico Cup could have been wished for than this. Vivid green turf below, blue sky above; a breeze sufficient to cool the air, perfumed by all the scents of the midsummer season; dust laid by an opportune shower of the day before, which had been just the one thing needed to give the rubber "cushion" effect to the track and make

it "fast" for the flying hoofs of the thoroughbreds.

Society, alive to the excitement to be found in the renewal of the Quantico Cup after so many years, had trooped back from the mountain and seashore retreat for the first day of the meeting, at least. Luckily, Quantico was close enough to the ocean and summits to admit of a hurried trip from Saturday to Monday—for this was Saturday. Tally-hos were "tooled" down the road, to the discomfiture of ordinary, everyday horse-flesh unused to the blare and fanfare of the rich, aristocratic element, bound for the races. Automobiles whizzed along on the side of the smooth boulevard, down the center of which the electric cars were conveying race-goers, who occupied every available place but the roofs; pedestrians plodded along, with the turnstiles of the track as their destinations.

By the time the first race had been run the club-house was filled with the fashionables. Ladies in filmy gowns, summer "creations" of world-famous dressmakers, graced the balcony and verandas, the tan of seashore or mountain on their pretty faces. Save for a languid interest in the races preceding the fourth—the Quantico Cup—they were mostly content to renew acquaintanceships, to survey one another, rather than criticize the appearance of the racers.

Miss Carryl, accompanied by the Honorable Algy, did not appear at the club-house until the second race had been run. Lamar, who had been fretting over her absence until he had frayed his nerves sadly, imagining she intended to withdraw her horse at the last moment and deny him the pleasure of even a glimpse, fretted still more when he saw her arrive with her British escort.

She did not see him. In pure white she was gowned, a large bunch of poppies at her corsage. He wondered vaguely why, with her complexion and her hair, she should choose such vivid floral adornment. Why, of course, the reason now was plain enough. They were her colors—the "all-scarlet," the fa-

mous "tanager," which had flashed in front so often on former fields. She would not deny her colors, even for her complexion.

What a regal, self-contained woman she was, he thought, as the members of her set flocked about her. They rallied about her, the gay butterfly women and men, as if her scarlet poppies were an oriflamme, and she an up-to-date Joan of Arc, whose turf achievements were to lead her devoted followers to conquer the most dreadful enemy in their calendar, ennui.

The Honorable Algy was extremely attentive, Lamar noticed, with dark jealousy. The Englishman could not be blamed for playing the moth to such a glorious flame. But would he prove only a moth? From the way in which Miss Carryl treated him, it did not seem so, Lamar reflected grimly.

He also saw his uncle, the ex-senator, the pronounced celibate, famed for his hatred for womankind as much as his fondness for horse-flesh and his knowledge of thoroughbreds, strolling about the piazza with some horsemen friends. Lamar, the elder, paused a moment, looking knowingly in the direction of Miss Carryl, still chatting in easy fashion with the Britisher. Then the ex-senator asked a question of one of his companions, nodding in the direction of the couple. The other bowed an affirmative, and the ex-senator, placing his eye-glasses carefully on his nose, gazed at the girl with his supercilious, cynical air for a brief space before resuming his stroll down the steps and out to the paddock.

Bah! Horace experienced a feeling of disgust for his nearest relative. That look reminded him of a spider, coolly surveying the approach of a winged victim.

Now Miss Carryl and her escort had moved slowly down the piazza, closer to his corner. They were joined by a group of girls of her acquaintance, who greeted her effusively and made much of her as the heroine of the occasion.

"Will your little red devil lead the others home to-day, Connie?" Lamar overheard one of the maids ask. She

referred to the Carryl colors, which transformed the wearer into a veritable Mephisto.

"Of course I shall believe so until it is proven otherwise," was the reply. "Strephon is at his best and will stand a lot of beating to-day, his trainer tells me. I look upon him as a sure winner."

"But your horse is regarded as being too heavily weighted to win, is he not? Is it a case of retaliation, Connie?" persisted the tease in a lower tone, meaningly.

This was one occasion where an eavesdropper did not hear evil of himself. Miss Carryl turned and confronted the speaker with a chilly stare.

"I do not understand your reference," she said icily. "You seem to overlook the fact that Mr. Lamar is a man of honor. Besides, nothing has given him cause for retaliatory measures."

The Honorable Algy looked from one to the other stupidly.

With pulses throbbing strangely, Horace Lamar slipped over to the paddock. He knew it was the general impression that he had treated his uncle's horse leniently in the matter of weight, and had been a trifle severe on Strephon. Even the best meaning of friends will convey to an intimate the hint of popular disapproval.

Lamar began to doubt himself. What if his calculations really had been faulty? He felt as if already he had been disgraced.

While the sporting element, one and all, had settled upon Sikh as the winner, the "horsy set" of the Carryl and Lamar circle, doubtless through sympathy for the girl, affected to believe that her horse would capture the cup.

When the "odds" were posted by the book-makers, Sikh was held at an almost prohibitive price. Strephon was only third choice.

Now the saddling-bell had sounded. By twos and threes the club-house contingent sauntered through the gate into the paddock, to give the racers final inspection before the contest. The place was livened up by the approach

of beauty, and the merry laughter and chatter of women's voices rose above the eager ones of the horse people, discussing the chances of this or that candidate.

Outside the level row of stalls the representative of the Lamar stable was being prepared. The horse was a big chestnut brute, with an ungovernable temper, so vicious that he had to be muzzled to keep him from "savaging" spectators. To all appearances, he was as "fit" at could be, full of fire and vigor. His owner, with whom just now the nephew had no desire to commune, was looking him over complacently, the center of an attentive knot of cronies. From desultory remarks dropped, they evidently had bet heavily on the "all-blue" candidate.

Down near the fence separating the paddock from the track the little black, Strephon, was being made ready. Purely as an official, the handicapper walked to where the horse was being saddled and stood outside the large ring of spectators.

The little thoroughbred, though small, was "all horse," as one bystander remarked. He was champing the bit, tossing his head, stretching his neck, and lashing out alternately with his hind legs, much in the manner a ballet-dancer stretches her limbs in the wings before going "on" to execute her difficult pirouettes.

Miss Carryl was not there. As Lamar glanced around, he saw her approaching. On one side was the Honorable Algy, on the other, in the brilliant "all-scarlet," Jockey Roemer.

So, at least, she had believed him in that regard, and had taken his advice. It only showed—so he thought—how much in earnest was she about winning.

Their eyes met, and Lamar fancied that her cheeks glowed a little warmer as she greeted him with a formal bow. Of course he had been mistaken about the blush. It was but a chance reflection of the poppy flowers she wore.

Easily and gracefully the girl threaded her way through the crowd and stood talking with the trainer. No

trace of the mannish woman showed about her—a sweet, healthy girl, evincing a natural interest in a matter which concerned her vitally.

The paddock was soon deserted by both spectators and horses, and lawn and grand stand, from front-row boxes to highest tier, were packed with race-goers eager for the contest about to begin. All eyes were turned on the nine racers in the hands of the starter, a quarter of a mile up the track. Horace Lamar, controlling himself with an effort, occupied a position nearly opposite the judges' stand, on a tier just back of the reserved-seat boxes. Nervously his eyes roved from the dancing, impatient racers at the barrier to a figure in white seated calmly in a box below him. The girl was resting her elbows carelessly on the edge of the box, hands clasped together. On the ledge were her field-glasses, through which she did not trouble herself to watch the start.

Up went the barrier.

They were off!

Almost simultaneously the sleek-coated racers sprang into their stride. It was a perfect start.

Strephon's position at the post was fourth, Sikh was on the extreme outside.

Like a troop of cavalry the riders moved down the stretch. Lean neck outstretched with lean neck, stride for stride, rising and descending haunch to haunch, they swept past the furlong-pole, down the track toward the grand stand. A jet of dust, like escaping steam, spurted from underneath each flying hoof, from the fast-drying track! It was the beginning.

A yell from the black lawn, echoed by the packed grand stand, reverberating from end to middle and back again, from highest tier to lowest.

A shout of wonder, of delight, of admiration, at the piece of daring!

For Bart, Lamar's crack jockey, by a clever bit of horsemanship, had gained advantage at the very outset. One point had been scored for the favorite.

Knowing the speed of which Sikh was capable at the start, and confident

in his own capability to avoid a foul, Bart had urged his mount sharply to the left, diagonally cutting across his field before the others could get well into their stride. On the rail, the position of vantage, a length ahead of the second horse, and going easily, showed the Lamar "blue" as they swept past the stand. Sikh seemed able to make a runaway race of it. The second choice, The Ace, a black thoroughbred, was closest to the flying leader. Strephon had not improved his position. Around the paddock turn they swept, past the thundering thousands, now subsiding into breathless silence.

As they sped around into the back-stretch, with no startling move save that the second and third horses had changed places, Lamar's eyes again sought the figure of Miss Carryl. She was still seated in her listless fashion, smiling indifferently to her excited companion, who seemed trying to keep track of the racers, hold his glasses to his eyes, and gesticulate violently all at one time.

Again Lamar's eyes fastened themselves on the racers. Now they were speeding down the back-stretch. Iridescent and evanescent gleamed the colors of the jockeys. They had finished half of their journey. See, even as the handicapper had expected, three had dropped behind, were lagging. Better should they have remained in their stalls than be put to the useless struggle with their fleeter-footed, sounder brethren. Across the level green of the infield he watched the horses swooping down on the track—five in the first flight, three in the second division, already a lone laggard half-a-dozen lengths behind.

Cries of approval from the boxes, well-modulated feminine shrieks of delight.

Strephon, the game little black, had crept up into third place. A murmur of excitement seemed to come from every throat.

"The favorite falls back! He's tiring fast," was the cry.

"Sikh—he comes again!"

For a brief space it seemed that the

blue had faltered, was falling back. The Ace again had crept up, and Strephon, with heart of steel, was sweeping along with his unfaltering, unvarying stride a half length behind The Ace's quarters.

A shout of exultation:

"The favorite's coming again!"

Lamar's practised eyes had taken in the situation. Sikh's tremendous early speed had dulled the edge of his courage. Certainly he was tiring. Bart, careful, experienced jockey that he was, might nurse him yet until the finish.

So they reached the far turn, the four leading horses well bunched. Farther back than the blue of Sikh, the oriole colors of The Ace, and the "all-scarlet" of Strephon, Lamar's eyes did not stray.

As the leading horse turned the corner for home, she rose from her seat, leaned forward, and looked through her glasses at the approaching field.

At the instant, as if a crisis was at hand, Lamar changed glance from the white gown to the scarlet colors and set his teeth. For but a few inches, a hardly appreciable distance, did the little horse swerve from his course as he turned into the straight. The jockey, whip out like a flash, had struck Strephon on the side of the head next to the point where he would have swerved. It occupied but the fractional part of a second, that byplay, and again Strephon was running straight and true down the stretch.

"Good old Roemer," Lamar muttered through clenched teeth. "I trusted you. You did not fail me."

"Strephon! Strephon will win!" yelled the enthused spectators as the Carryl representative moved up a furlong from the finish and collared The Ace. That racer's jockey, far from napping, struck the big black two or three downward blows of the whip.

There! Big and little blacks were on even terms, Strephon on the outside, The Ace next, Sikh on the rail, but a neck in front. In a couple more lengths they had reached the flying leader. The weight was beginning to tell on him.

One hundred yards from the finish

the three charged head and head, nose and nose. Like animated land torpedoes of erratic form and movement, they seemed—the swift projectiles of some powerful force which had started them on their career. Strephon's jockey, crouched low over his mount's neck, in his scarlet looked like a glowing furnace flame. So close together did blue, oriole, and scarlet keep the racers might have been confined in triple harness.

"Sikh wins!" "The Ace wins!" "The scarlet is ahead!" shrieked the frantic thousands, yelling and waving arms in universal confusion as the three leaders passed the finish, the fourth horse less than half-a-length away, the next up to his withers.

Whatever the verdict, it was a vindication for the handicapper. He caught a glimpse of the Honorable Algy hammering the box-edge with his glasses and turning as if to congratulate the girl beside him. She had risen, and seemed to be looking down the track at the racers, now restrained in their mad flight.

Lamar flashed his glance to the number-board opposite and thence to the judges. They appeared to be deliberating gravely.

Up went "No. 1," Sikh's designation, with "No. 5," that of Strephon, below, and alongside the words, "Dead Heat." The official verdict was that the Carryl and Lamar horses had finished in front together, and no man could decide the winner. It was necessary to have the two horses go over the route again, to decide which should get the cup.

When the owner of the rival horse, hat in hand, had approached the lady herself with the salutation, "I am Mr. Lamar, Miss Carryl," she looked at him with thinly veiled contempt and responded with a mildly inquisitive "Yes?"

"Are you willing to have your horse meet mine immediately for the final decision, Miss Carryl?" he asked.

"By no means, Mr. Lamar," was her cool answer. "When I entered him for the cup, it was no guarantee that I should allow him to win twice over.

Why, there was no doubt of his being in front. I saw it clearly."

The final appeal of Sikh's owner, "Very well, then, Miss Carryl, of course the cup will go to me," fell on deaf ears, apparently. The lady had turned her back on the speaker and was preparing to leave the stand with the Honorable Algy.

Lamar, the elder, did not seem vastly elated over the outcome, though he saw fit to congratulate his nephew on his adjustment of the weights. The nephew appeared glum and unhappy.

Next day, which was the Sabbath, the uncle called his nephew into the library. While the talk was protracted, evidently the views of the two were in perfect accord, for when they came out the younger man was smiling. Moreover, the uncle poked him in the ribs, calling him "a devil of a fellow."

The following morning Lamar entered his uncle's automobile, which later dropped him at the steps of the Tanager Farm mansion. Just a short while before the young man started, a messenger had left Tanager Farm with a note addressed to Mr. Horace Lamar. The messenger, taking a more direct route than the automobile, did not meet it. On reaching the Lamar home, the note-bearer was informed that Lamar, the younger, was on his way to the place from where the missive had been despatched, and returned there with it.

Horace Lamar appeared relieved on learning that Miss Carryl was "at home." He carried a package in his arms.

He found her in the drawing-room—alone. She started up with the query, "You received my note so soon? I did not expect a reply in person."

He shook his head and looked at her wonderingly.

"I received no message," he said, and, then, without further inquiry, went straight to the point. "I have brought you the cup, Miss Carryl. It is the express wish of my uncle that you should take it."

She shook her head.

"I still believe that my horse was ahead at the finish," she said. "Really,

I am sincere in my conviction. The judges, however, decided otherwise, and as I would not consent to a 'run off,' your uncle could not do otherwise than take it."

Lamar's quick rejoinder was: "Perhaps you will be surprised to hear that he urged you to have the race run over because he was certain your horse was fresher and could have beaten his own. You had no idea of that, had you?"

No answer.

"He said more than that, Miss Carryl. He watched you through the whole race, and he declared that you were one out of ten thousand—a true sports-woman. You were the true type of woman to his mind. Why, you won his heart, Miss Carryl," he continued unsteadily. "His exact words were: 'If that damned Englishman hadn't got her, I'd try for her myself.' You see, he was in earnest."

She could not prevent herself from laughing a little.

"You must thank your uncle for the interest—the entirely unexpected interest—he has shown," she began, then hesitated a little. "As far as the Honorable Algy is concerned, however," she said then, slowly and a little shamefacedly, "your uncle had no right to consider him. By this time he is on his way home, never to return here, he says."

"Do you mean to tell me that—that you refused him?" Lamar asked, a little dazed.

"I never gave him any encouragement. It was only his own persistence that brought him over. It will not be a violation of confidence to tell such an old friend as you the whole story. He knew my avowed intention not to marry anybody but a good American, and he even offered—think of it!—to renounce his allegiance if I would—would consider him seriously." She paused a moment. "I do not care for men who either offer inducements or allow themselves to be tempted."

A blush of vivid crimson suffused her features. She rose and left the room. Returning, she handed him a letter.

"Read that," she said in a low tone. And when with trembling fingers he had broken the seal of the envelope addressed to him, this is what he saw:

TANAGER FARM, Monday.

DEAR MR. LAMAR: As I was not afforded the opportunity of thanking you verbally after the race, for the part you took in making my horse at least half a winner, I hasten to do so in writing.

Also I wish to disabuse your mind of a wrong impression. I do not blame you, censuring myself, as I do, for the false light in which I placed myself on the occasion of my visit to you at your office. I know that you must have thought the only cause for my visit was to persuade you to handicap my horse so lightly he could not fail to win.

That was not the case. More I will tell you and something in proof, which will hurt my pride sorely, but it is confession. It was *you*, you alone, whom I wished to see.

I cannot conclude without referring to the barrier, the insuperable barrier, which must separate us and prevent the happiness of both.

Forgive me and forget.

Your friend always,

CONSTANCE CARRYL.

"Then it means that I still have a chance," declared Lamar wildly. He had risen and taken her hand and she did not withdraw it.

"Why did you not send for me and tell me 'yes'?" he whispered at last. "What possible thing could keep us apart? What was the barrier of which you wrote?"

"It has been removed," she declared. "Did you not guess that I had heard your uncle would disinherit you if you should marry a Carryl?"

His eyes were opened now.

"And I thought it was because you did not care for me in the least," he said blissfully.

"I'm afraid you understand horses better than women, dear."

It was some minutes later when, once more returning to earth, he asked:

"Will you not allow the cup to remain now, sweetheart?"

"If it is to be a joint family possession, and you wish it, Horace," she murmured sweetly.

The glittering trophy was lifted from its case and stood before them. So absorbed were they in one another, they gave it but scant attention.

The REINCARNATION of CAPTAIN STRABO

B D
Joseph C. Lincoln




O the average eye, the *Daisy and Minnie* might have appeared picturesque, perhaps, but certainly not attractive as a possible abiding-place. She had lain for more than two years on the beach at Deacon's Neck, just where Pounddug Creek flows into the bay, opposite Bow Harbor village and within sight of the shingle-mill. At full tide the ripples washed her hull amidships; at low water she was high and dry on the sand. The rotten hawser that led from her bows was attached to nothing—some enterprising boys with an eye to the value of old iron had carried off her anchor. The sunshine had warped her planks and opened her seams. Her mainsail was gone, and her foresail hung in a draggled heap from the boom. She was an outcast of the sea, forlorn and useless on shore, and no doubt that is why she drew to her Captain Strabo Utters, for misery, as everybody knows, loves company.

The captain had stopped and looked her over as he drove by that forenoon. Now, as he sat in the rickety buggy and urged David, the fat, white horse, along the dark wood road to Minister's Point, he thought of her as a possible refuge from domestic trouble, and a haven where he might spend in peace his remaining years. In her he would be near at hand in case—unfortunately, an unlikely case—he should be needed again by his wife. He could not go to sea, because he had promised Olivia that he would not; but life aboard a stranded schooner would be a pleasant compromise. If he only had the "spunk" to leave home and try the experiment!

But, unfortunately, "spunk" was what he lacked.

And yet, only a few years before, Strabo Utters had been a skipper of ability and with a reputation for courage unlimited. At sea, aboard the coaster *Sunrise*, no one ever gave back talk to the "old man"—at least, not more than once. On land, however, it was different, and it was on land, at the home of Mrs. Lorena Poundberry, of Wellmouth, Cape Cod, that Captain Strabo had met, wooed, and won Olivia Dabney, widow of Abel Dabney, of Bow Harbor, Connecticut. Then, because his bride had wished it, the captain retired from the sea forever, moved to the Dabney cottage at Minister's Point, and began to be sorry for it.

It wasn't so bad at first, although Mrs. Utters early showed a disposition to "boss things." The easiest way was to let her "boss," and this Captain Strabo did until it was too late to change. Then "Bennie D." walked in at the door, and marital bliss promptly flew out of the window.

"Bennie D." was the late Mr. Dabney's brother. He was a genius—at least, he said he was—and an inventor. The only invention which he had perfected was a means of living without work, but he had for years been "completing" a marvelous machine which was to furnish motive power for the universe. Abel had left him a little money, and he promptly spent it in traveling "for his health." Now, the health having been regained and the legacy lost, "Bennie D." returned to Minister's Point to live with sister Olivia and continue the "completing" process. He found his new brother-in-law a most unnecessary and expensive addition to

the household. So, being a genius, he promptly set about ridding the premises of an incumbrance. In a period of five months he had made considerable progress. On land Captain Strabo was a meek sheep in the hands of the butcher.

When the captain drove into the yard of the lonely house at the end of Minister's Point there was a light in the kitchen. He led David into the barn, unharnessed the animal, and, filling his arms with packages—purchases at the village—opened the kitchen door. Mrs. Utters was wiping dishes, and "Bennie D." was helping her; that is to say, he was seated in the rocker, reading aloud from the Hartford morning paper. The captain's arrival created no sensation; reading and dish-wiping went serenely on.

"Well, 'Livia," ventured Captain Strabo, putting his packages on a chair. "I've fetched port finally."

His wife rubbed a tumbler with the towel, held it to the light, and rubbed it again.

"I say," repeated her husband—"I say I've fetched port finally, 'Livia."

Mrs. Utters held up the tumbler, turned it slowly about, put it down, and took up another.

"I s'pose," she observed frostily, "that, as you use my name, you're speakin' to me. Otherwise I should judge by your language you was givin' orders to Portugees on a fishin'-boat."

This wasn't encouraging. Her husband hung up his hat, fidgeted a moment, and tried again.

"I was only sayin', 'Livia," he explained, "that I'd got home at last."

"Yes, I see you have—at last. Bennie, just read that part over again, won't you, please? I missed some of it."

The inventor obligingly refolded the paper and went on reading the testimony in a sensational murder case then on trial in New York. The captain wandered aimlessly into the dining-room.

"'Livia," he ventured, after an interval, "is supper ready?"

"Bennie D." laughed. Mrs. Utters held up a hand and the reading ceased.

"Excuse me, Bennie," she said. "I'll apologize for interruptin' you, seein' that other folks haven't the manners to do it." Then, turning toward the dining-room, she asked sharply: "What was that you said?"

"I was only askin' if supper was ready."

"Bennie D." laughed again.

"Supper?" repeated Olivia. "Supper? You mean breakfast, don't you? No, breakfast ain't quite ready yet, though it's 'most time for it. Go on with the readin'."

"Why, 'Livia!" faltered her husband, appearing in the doorway. "I ain't so very late; that is, so everlastin' awful late. I had a good many things to do. You see——"

He entered upon a long and rambling explanation: how he had been to the store, stopped at the tavern—"jest for a minute"—and then, as he was passing the Christy place, the widow Christy had come out and spoken to him, and——

"Bennie D." laughed again. He had a most disagreeable habit of laughing just at the wrong place; Mrs. Utters was of a jealous temperament.

"Yes!" snapped the lady. "You can stop to talk to Sarah Ann Christy—gossipin' thing!—while your own wife is at home worryin' her life out, not knowin' but you was drowned or somethin' wuss. I should think——"

She told him what she should think for the next five minutes. "Bennie D." laughed at intervals.

"For all I knew, you might have been run away with and killed," said Mrs. Utters. "But you didn't care for my feelin's! Oh, no! I was the last thing——"

"Run away your grandmarm!" retorted Captain Strabo, goaded to unwonted spirit. "That pesky slow-poke of a horse wouldn't run away for nothin', 'less 'twas a bushel of oats. How could I help talkin' to Sarah Ann? Couldn't tell her to shut up and go in the house, could I? She kept her tongue a-clackin', and I——"

"Yes, I know! You didn't have spunk enough to tell her you was in a

hurry. Oh, why did I marry a man without gumption enough to say 'Boo!' to a hen? Why did I?"

"Dummed if I know!" The captain made the remark under his breath, but "Bennie D." heard it. He laughed, of course.

"What was that?" asked Mrs. Utters sharply. "What was it he said, Bennie?"

"I didn't hear exactly, sister. At any rate, I think I'd better not repeat it."

Olivia burst into tears. Captain Strabo was desperate.

"You mind your own business!" he shouted, turning toward the placid inventor. "Ain't you ashamed, makin' trouble with a man's wife in his own house?"

"Ah, indeed?" Mr. Dabney did not raise his voice. "I was under the impression that the house belonged to Olivia."

This was unexpected, and took the wind out of the captain's sails. He floundered helplessly in a sea of sputtering indignation.

"Great big loafer!" he ejaculated. "Settin' here doin' nothin' but raisin' the devil generally! I've a good mind——"

"Don't be profane," cautioned "Bennie D." "There is a lady present."

Then Olivia found her voice. She demanded to know if her husband was tired of her. She could go—was willing to go at any time. She wouldn't be a burden on any one for the world. Her brother-in-law interrupted her.

"I am the burden," he said. "I am the one who should go. I'll pack my trunk immediately."

"You shan't do no such thing. The idea! Anybody but a husband like mine would be ashamed to drive away the only friend I've got. But he doesn't care! 'Twould just suit him! Why don't he go himself, if he's so set on somebody's goin'? Why don't he——"

Captain Strabo struck the table with his fist. For the first time since his marriage he looked like his old self.

"By time!" he thundered. "I *will* go! Good-by!"

The dining-room door shut with a bang. Mrs. Utters looked uneasy.

"You—you don't s'pose he means it, do you?" she whispered.

"Bennie D." laughed. "No, no," he said. "He'll be down looking for supper pretty soon."

But the next morning, as Solon Peters, foreman at the shingle-mill, passed the *Daisy and Minnie* on his way to work, he saw a weather-beaten little figure by the schooner's hatch.

"Why! why, hello, Cap'n Strabo!" he hailed. "What are you doin' aboard that derelict?"

Captain Strabo turned a very sober face toward his questioner.

"If nobody hadn't no objection," he replied slowly, "I was cal'latin' to live on her."

"Live on her?" gasped the astonished foreman. "Live on her?"

"Ya-as," drawled Captain Strabo; "I was figgerin' to live aboard her—for a spell."

II.

That season Bow Harbor had one more attraction for its summer visitors. Besides sailing down the bay to the lighthouse and visiting the old wind-mill on Lookout Hill, it became the regular thing to sail across to Deacon's Neck and call on "the funny old man who lives in a wreck." Parties came from Hunteerton and as far away as Baymouth and Lonesome Cove, and they climbed over the *Daisy and Minnie* and upset things and asked questions. One Sunday came a boatload of Italian laborers, who were building the dam which was to turn the upper portion of Pounddug Creek into a reservoir and carp pond on the estate of Mr. Barclay Ogden-Ogden, at Hillcrest-Among-the-Pines. And the next day a shining naphtha-launch brought the great Ogden-Ogden himself, accompanied by ladies with silken gowns and diamonds, who stared and cried: "How exquisitely odd!" and "Do you actually live here?" On the whole, Captain Strabo preferred the Italians.

The captain did not yearn for this publicity. The lime-light had no at-

tractions for him. He did odd jobs about the sawmill when opportunity offered, and went berrying and clamming betweenwhiles. In the evenings and when it rained he worked on the *Daisy and Minnie*. The cabin was cleaned and scrubbed and put in order. The gaping seams were calked with rags and tar. The ropes were untangled and coiled. There was no particular purpose in all this, but it kept him from dwelling upon his troubles. And yet, in the twilight, Captain Strabo sometimes stared long and soberly down the bay in the direction of Minister's Point. If it wasn't for "Bennie D."—But there, as the captain said to himself, "you can't have two skippers aboard any one craft." And meanwhile Mr. Dabney was consoling his deserted sister-in-law and gradually paving the way for an application for divorce.

One evening, late in September, the captain sat in the *Daisy and Minnie's* cabin reading the *Bow Harbor Weekly*. It was a mild night outside. It had rained for three days, and when, on the morning of the fourth day, the clouds broke and the downpour ceased, landsmen prophesied that it was "fairin' off." But sea-going folk, like the captain, peered at the sky and water and shook their heads. "More dirty weather yet," said they, and by nightfall their forebodings were realized. The rain and wind were worse than ever.

At half-past eight Captain Strabo put on his oilskins and went on deck to make all taut for the night. It was so dark that the schooner's jibboom was invisible. The raindrops jumped when they struck the deck. The incoming tide was unusually high, and good-sized waves slapped the schooner's stern. The gale howled through the pines on shore.

The captain had brought his lantern from the cabin and hoisted it into the forerigging. A self-respecting seaman always shows his riding-light at night. Just as the line was made fast there was a faint hail from the shore.

"Hello!" it came again. "Hello!"

"Ship ahoy!" bellowed Captain Strabo, through his hands. "Ahoy, there!"

There was a crashing amid the bushes on shore.

"Oh, dear!" gasped somebody—a feminine somebody. "Oh, my soul and body! I'm drowned alive! I know I am!"

"Hey?" exclaimed Captain Strabo. "Am I dreamin', or— Run alongside, here for'ard, ma'am," he commanded. "I'm a-comin' with the lantern."

"Who is it?" cried the unseen voice, a note of alarm in it. "It can't be— Bennie! Bennie! Where are you?"

The captain, leaning over the rail, held up the lantern. "Great land of love!" he ejaculated. "'Livin'!"

In the swaying circle of light appeared the bulky form of Mrs. Olivia Utters. Her bonnet was a pulpy mass plastered upon streaming wisps of hair. Her best gown—the gown she was married in—clung to her figure as if glued. Water dripped from her outstretched hands, her ears, and the end of her nose.

"Strabo!" cried Mrs. Utters, and collapsed on the sand.

Just how long husband and wife would have remained staring at each other if uninterrupted is a question. But an interruption came. The bushes cracked and snapped, and into the circle of light strode "Bennie D.," wet and angry.

"Huh!" he grunted. "It's him, is it? I thought so. Well, he'll have to take us in, that's all. Get aboard."

But Olivia was of a different opinion. She rose and grasped Mr. Dabney by the arm. "Get aboard?" she repeated. "Get aboard *there*? Do you s'pose I'll step my foot in his house, or boat, or whatever 'tis, after all that's gone afore? I'll drown first. Come back to the buggy this minute."

"Buggy nothing! There ain't any buggy. The blasted horse has run away. Get aboard, do you hear? I'm tired of your foolishness."

Mr. Dabney clambered over the rail as he spoke. His sister-in-law wrung her hands.

"Run away!" she repeated feebly.

"Run away! What shall I do?"

And then Captain Strabo arose to

the situation. He leaped upon the sand and took his wife by the arm.

"Livia," he said, "you come right along with me."

The lady still protested and held back, but the captain was firm. He "boosted" her to the deck and led the way to the warm, dry cabin, where "Bennie D." was already occupying the most comfortable locker.

"Now, there!" said Captain Strabo, "I cal'late you'll want to fix up some, 'Livia. Go right in aft there, behind the bulkhead. There's an old pea-jacket of mine you can slip on. That'll dry you some; and I'll bile a kittle of tea."

Mrs. Utters, dripping and shivering, stumbled toward the "bulkhead," which was an old quilt hung across the little cabin. As she lifted it she hesitated and turned.

"Thank you, Strabo," she stammered. "You're real kind."

The captain's face lit up. But the watchful "Bennie D." thought it time to interfere.

"Don't be a fool, Olivia," he said sharply. "Look here, Utters," he continued. "There's one thing you ought to understand. We didn't come to this—this hulk of yours on purpose. My sister has too much respect for that, I hope. We drove over to Hunterton this afternoon to see—"

Mrs. Utters laid a hand on his arm. "Don't, Bennie," she protested. "Please don't."

"Be quiet, Olivia; I intend that this man shall understand your feelings toward him. We went to Hunterton to see Squire Holt about a divorce for my sister, whom you deserted. He was out, and we waited until dark. Then the storm came on, we started for home and took the wrong road. We got out to find the way, the horse was frightened at a tree that blew down, and ran. That's all. We're obliged to stay here to-night, but we'll rid ourselves of your company in the morning. Understand, do you?"

The captain rose. "I cal'late I understand," he said sullenly. Then, after a moment, he added: "You'll find

the tea in that can on the shelf. There's some crackers and grub 'longside of it. Water's in the bucket, and you can use the ile-stove. 'Liv—the lady can turn in in the cabin here. I'll bunk for'ard, and you can come when you're ready."

Without looking at either of his guests, he went on deck and forward to the stuffy little forecabin, where he made himself a bed on the floor. In an hour or so "Bennie D." his arms filled with pillows and bedclothes, joined him. By ten o'clock the *Daisy* and *Minnie* was dark and still. The storm raged as hard as ever.

III.

Captain Strabo awoke suddenly. He was huddled in a corner of the forecabin, and his chin was aching from a blow. Dazedly he became aware that "Bennie D." was sprawling on top of him, and that it was Mr. Dabney's foot that had collided with his chin.

"What in time——" said the captain, and sat up. "Bennie D." who was twisted in the bedclothes, swore through a blanket.

Captain Strabo essayed to rise, and was on his knees when the *Daisy* and *Minnie* lurched violently to port. The occupants of the forecabin promptly slid across the floor and brought up with a thump against the beams on the other side. There was a creaking and splashing outside, and the schooner rose and fell, heaved and rolled.

"Thunder mighty!" shouted the captain. "We're afloat!"

He scrambled to his feet and dived for the forecabin ladder. He found it—with his head—and climbed to the deck. It was pitch-dark, the rain had ceased, there was hardly a breath of wind, and all around was nothing but fog, thick, wet, and heavy. No land was visible, and the *Daisy* and *Minnie* was pitching violently in waves such as the captain had not seen since his sea-going days.

"All hands on deck!" he roared. "Tumble up, there!"

No one "tumbled up," but from the

cabin came muffled screams and shouts for help. He ran to the companion, jumped below, and pawed about the blackness, amid upset furniture and cooking utensils, for a lantern. Behind the quilt Mrs. Utters was alternately screaming and affirming that she was dead.

"Don't be scart, 'Livia," panted her husband. "We ain't shark meat yit. Wait till I strike a glim."

He found the lantern after awhile, and dived into his trousers pocket—he had "turned in" in his clothes—for a match. When the lantern was lit he disinterred Olivia from the confused mass of blankets, canned goods, and cracker-boxes, and led her to the deck.

"It's all right," he repeated. "It's all right. Don't cry. You set down in the lee of the cabin and hang on, and we'll fetch port yit. I've been in wuss scrapes than this and kept out of the breakers. But what in time's happened is too many for me."

What had happened was the bursting of the partially built dam at Hill-crest-Among-the-Pines: This and the tremendous tide had flooded the docks and fish-houses at Bow Harbor, swept away the lower end of the shingle-mill, and incidentally treated the *Daisy* and *Minnie* to one more voyage. But of this her passengers were, of course, unaware.

Captain Strabo ran backward and forward, trying the pumps, inspecting the remnants of the foresail, and muttering to himself. Here was a situation that he knew how to cope with; this was like the old days when he was a man commanding men.

"Keep your pennant flyin', 'Livia," he called cheerfully, as he trotted past the trembling Mrs. Utters. "She ain't as dry as a Good Templar prayer-meetin', but if nothin' busts she won't sink for a long spell yit. If I only had ten-pair of hands, now! Who's that? Land! I forgot you."

It was "Bennie D.," dressed in the skipper's Sunday suit, which, as dry raiment, he had appropriated before retiring. The inventor was frightened out of his senses.

"What is it?" he demanded, seizing Captain Strabo by the arm. "What has happened?"

"Blessed if I know! We're afloat, that's all that's sartin jest now. Here! Bear a hand with that pump, won't you?"

But Mr. Dabney was much too agitated to bear a hand. He seized the captain fiercely by the shoulder.

"Put me ashore this minute!" he screamed. "You want to drown me; I know it! I'm going ashore, do you hear?"

The skipper held up the lantern and calmly inspected the frantic man. "Go ahead, then," he replied shortly. "Git out and walk; nobody's stoppin' you."

"Bennie D.," rushed aft to peer over the rail at the angry water. Mrs. Utters rose and threw her arm about his neck.

"Oh, Bennie!" she pleaded. "Please do as he wants you to. Please do, for my sake."

Mr. Dabney pushed her backward with savage force. "Shut your mouth!" he yelled, with an oath. "It's your foolishness that got me into this." Then, leaning over the rail, he called shrilly: "Help! I'm drowning! Help!"

Olivia staggered back against the deck-house. "Oh!" she said; "you hurt me!"

The next instant Mr. Dabney felt a sinewy hand on the back of his neck.

"I ordered you to pump," said Captain Strabo. "Now, then, you pump!"

"Let go!" screamed "Bennie D." "Take your hands off, or——"

The back of his head striking the deck put a period in the middle of the sentence.

"Pump!" roared Strabo Utters, the lantern between his feet and his clenched fists resting on his hips. "Forward to them pumps! Lively, now!"

The dazed inventor rose to his knees. "What——" he began. "Where——"

"Right amidships. Lively, you lubber!"

A well-directed kick helped Mr. Dabney in the right direction.

"What shall I do?" he wailed, fum-

bling the pump-brake. "How does it go?"

"Up and down—so." The captain jerked the inventor's head back and forth by way of illustration. "Now, then," he continued, "you pump till I say quit, or I'll make a spare tops'l out of your hide."

"Oh, Strabo——" began Mrs. Utters. Her husband turned on her like a flash.

"Livia," he shouted, "didn't I tell you to set down and set still? Must I give orders twice on my own deck? Set down!"

Olivia "set."

For the next few hours there was discipline and order aboard the *Daisy and Minnie*. Captain Strabo was transformed. The sea, the danger, and the vessel beneath his feet had completed what his life alone aboard the schooner had begun, and he was again the Tartar skipper who once commanded the *Sunrise*. He reveled in his authority. If Mrs. Utters, who had been given the task of pounding a pan to warn other craft that might be adrift in the fog, ventured to pause in the pounding, she was bidden to continue, and there were no words wasted in the bidding. Once the cowed "Bennie D.," laboring at the pumps, dared to pause a moment to rest his weary back. With a bellow the skipper leaped in his direction, and the vigor with which Mr. Dabney worked for the next half-hour was almost unbelievable.

And the captain never lost courage. He managed to hoist a portion of the tattered foresail, and deigned to inform his wife that he had "got steerage way on her, anyhow."

"But how do you know which way to steer, Strabo?" ventured Olivia timidly.

"Humph!" was the short reply. "I don't; but, by time! I'll keep her afore the wind, anyhow. You keep that pan a-goin'. I'll fetch port yit."

The waves grew gradually smaller, and, behind the fog, the light of morning broke. Then beneath the keel of the *Daisy and Minnie* sounded a long

scraping noise. The schooner shook and lay still.

"Well," said Captain Strabo, "we're aground somewheres. Nothin' to do but wait and see where we be."

"Bennie D." gratefully obeyed orders and stopped pumping. There was silence for awhile. Then Olivia spoke.

"Strabo," she whispered hesitatingly, "you've saved our lives. We'd have drowned if 'twan't for you."

No answer. Her husband was filling his pipe and peering into the fog. She tried again.

"Strabo," she said, "I—I never really did want that divorce, but Bennie, he—Strabo, I'm—I'm sorry."

The captain looked at her. He opened his mouth to speak, but just then came a puff of wind from a new direction. The fog blew into shreds and began to lift. Slowly beneath the schooner's bow developed the stumps of an inundated corn-field. Then a barn appeared, its rear portion surrounded by water; and then, out of the thinning mist, loomed a house, with a dripping locust-tree shading its porch—the house at Minister's Point.

"Why!" cried Olivia. "Why! it's our house! We're home!"

Strabo blew a great puff of tobacco-smoke.

"Well," he drawled, with a sigh of satisfaction, "I told you I'd fetch you into port, didn't I?"

Mrs. Utters looked up into his face. "I don't mind if you do talk sailor talk, after this, Strabo," she said.

With the sight of land and home "Bennie D.'s" courage began to return.

"Humph!" he grunted. "Talk about bull luck! Well, Olivia, we can leave this crazy hulk now, thank the Lord!"

But Strabo had learned his lesson.

"Silence, there, for'ard!" he roared. "You stay on board for a spell and clean ship. Livia, go ashore and git breakfast."

And, with his wife in his arms, Strabo Utters — Captain Strabo Utters — jumped overboard and waded to the home he was to rule henceforward.

FRANKIE PROPOSES

By Lucia Chamberlain



HEN whom in the world *do* you want to marry?" her mother despairingly demanded.

"Well, Lanse King, for one," said Frankie flippantly.

"But he doesn't want you," Mrs. Dutton replied, with gloomy satisfaction.

"What's that got to do with it?" Frankie inquired, approving the set of the girdle she was tightening.

"A good deal, in the real world! I hope you haven't been reading Bernard Shaw, Frankie," her mother anxiously ended.

"I would give him my purity and goodness as willingly as I would give my shawl to a beggar!" Frankie quoted blithely. "You took me to 'Candida' yourself, mama."

Mrs. Dutton rose her height, whose severity was somewhat impaired by her plumpness.

"Frances, never let me hear that quotation from your lips again! I consider it an insult to my sex! I—it—" she panted in her inability to find a word bad enough.

"Very well, mama," her daughter conceded; "I won't. There's only one thing I won't do to please you, and that's to marry that Cook man."

"McCook," her mother hastily corrected.

"McCook or O'Cook," said Frankie, giving her hat a determined tilt over her nose, "I won't!"

"He's a very prudent young man!" Mrs. Dutton sighed.

"That's just it," said Frankie firmly. "If he were old I could bear it bet-

ter, but a prudent young man I cannot, will not, abide!"

Mrs. Dutton surveyed her daughter's preparations dubiously. There was a suggestion of high festivity in her arrangement.

"Where are you going, Frankie?" she demanded.

"Lunch with Laura Koenig and matinee afterward," said Frankie, tying her veil with an impish flirt. There was a gleam in her eye and a play in her dimple that meant mischief. For a week Mrs. Dutton had had vague premonitions of "something in the wind," and now her suspicion was gathering ground.

"Well, I hope you don't expect to meet any one else," she warningly admonished.

Frankie shot a diabolical glint over her shoulder.

"Would you mind so awfully if I expected to meet Mr. McCook?"

Mrs. Dutton let her arms fall with a gesture of giving it all up.

"But if you're not going to marry him, why are you—"

Frankie chuckled. She seized her coque-feather boa, whirled it twice round her neck, flinging the long ends over her shoulders, and gave her small, straight-fronted, hollow-backed figure a final twist and jerk.

"Wait and see," she called as she whisked out of the room, blowing a kiss to her mother as she vanished. She raced down-stairs with the mad, scattering abandon of a kitten, and, swinging open the big front door, plunged out into the buffeting San Francisco "trade." The wind took the tail of her

long skirt that she had caught up, and blew it out like a pennon. The ends of her coque boa floated like thistle-down. She seized the front point of her white *directoire* hat and gave it a closer tug over her red hair, as, bending like a wisp in the wind, she tacked down the steep pavement.

There was something about Frankie Dutton so young, so little, so unquenchably kittenlike, that, barring McCook, it was impossible for any one but an undergraduate to take her seriously. Yet Frankie was three-and-twenty, and badly in love with Lansing King. It was her good fortune to look neither her age nor her affections. Primarily, Frankie was disarming. In reality, she was a little pirate privateer, taking a few preliminary tacks before swooping down on the big merchantman, her prize; but her outward appearance was merely that of a harmless, pretty little girl, stepping into the corner drug-store to telephone. There were reasons why this was preferable to telephoning at home.

Safely ensconced in the box, she rang up Lansing King. She liked to ring up Lansing King, in his office on Montgomery Street, where he was always so awfully busy. The trouble had begun in just that way—by Frankie finding it more fun to talk frivolously to a man who was curt and in a hurry than to the youths at the club, who had plenty of time for gossip. Now, though her heart thumped a little wildly at the sound of the crisp query at the other end of the line, her voice came out lively and incorrigible to match her spirit:

"Mr. King, what are you going to do at one o'clock? Mrs. Koenig and I are going to lunch at the Palace. Wouldn't you like to join us there? Oh! You have a shipment? Oh, as big as that! How perfectly awful! Well, you just drop the whole thing and run around to the Palace for a bite with us." She waited a moment, then laughed. "Oh, yes, you can—right afterward. We're going on to the *matinée*. All right. The Turkish room, at one o'clock sharp, remember."

She hung up the receiver with a smile half triumphant, half rueful. Poor Lanse! He never did know how to dodge those invitations of hers. They always seemed to take his breath away, and he accepted before he knew it. There was no danger that the next victim on her list would do anything of the sort. Laura Koenig never did anything without premeditation. Now she objected to meeting Frankie at the dressmaker's at half-past eleven because it would interfere with having her hair dressed.

"Oh, there'll be lots of time for that afterward," Frankie airily assured her. "I've one or two little things to do myself, and we'll meet in the Turkish room at one-thirty." She sealed the reluctant Laura to her pledge, and this time, as she hung up the receiver, her smile was pure satisfaction. "That leaves me one half-hour clear with Lanse," she mused, "and now for the Cookie." She frowned. She wished he didn't have to be in it. "But if he isn't he'll have a fit and blab to mama," she meditated; "and since I need another man, anyway—yes, he's *got* to be in it." And, having arrived at this firm decision, she promptly proceeded to put him in.

Her appearance in his office was no more bewildering to Mr. McCook than her airy announcement that she was very much afraid she couldn't lunch with him that day. He didn't remember having asked her to lunch with him, but he was too flattered to mention it. The idea agreeably fluttered in his mind that this girl wasn't, after all, so indifferent to him as she had pretended.

"You see," Frankie was explaining, "this luncheon I have on hand is such an informal affair that I would say come and join us, only—well, to tell the truth, we're putting up a joke on one of the people."

"But couldn't you let me into it?" he wanted to know.

"Oh, if it were only my joke!"—and Frankie sent him a charming glance—"but, you see, it's theirs, too, and it wouldn't be just fair to let it out. And, of course, you wouldn't care to listen to a lot of nonsense that you didn't

know about—it would bore you to death," she magnanimously ended.

McCook rose guilelessly to the bait. "But don't you think I might get onto what it was?" he complaisantly suggested.

"Why, so you might!" said Frankie, evidently much struck. "Well, of course we'll be delighted if you care to come. But are you sure you won't mind what we say? Very well—then, I'll look for you. One-thirty sharp, Palace grill," she threw over her shoulder, and hid her dimple in the ruff of her coque-feather boa.

It was coming out beautifully. Frankie smiled mischievously, remembering her mother's warning, as she swung away down the street toward the dressmaker's. If mama thought the best thing a girl could do was to marry the man who wanted her, then mama was on the wrong tack, the fact being conclusively proved by papa, who, as papa, was, of course, very nice indeed, but as a person to marry, in Frankie's eyes, distinctly a failure. Frankie's experience, both in boarding-school and society, had been that people were not apt to fall in love with the right person without some slight assistance. The eyes into which the frolicsome wind blew the fluff of her low pompadour were scheming eyes as she mounted the steps of Madame Edourde's establishment.

In the waiting-room she found Laura Koenig, cross at being kept waiting, and bored by the idea of watching another woman try on a new gown.

"What are you having, Frankie?" she languidly inquired, caressing her French poodle—"another cute white one?"

"Not exactly," said Frankie cautiously. "I thought I'd try something new."

"I should think you had!" Mrs. Koenig almost screamed at her, as the gown came in glittering on madame's arm. "Black! Why, Frankie Dutton!"

"Why not?" said Frankie, shrouding her delighted smile in the convolutions of gauze madame was deftly slipping over her head.

"Why, it's so ridiculous for a little

shrimp like you! I would as soon think of a baby in black," Mrs. Koenig decreed, as the gown began to take shape on Frankie, hooked round by madame's energetic fingers. Glittering with scale-spangles, from the shoulders over the curve of the hips it fitted like a sheath, then floated away in misty blackness to the floor, and from the sparkling shoulder-caps angel-sleeves descended, adding to this luxurious toilet an air of state and elaboration.

"It is most entrancingly becoming to mad'moiselle," Madame Edourde announced, with a resentful glance at Mrs. Koenig, "but it is in such a different mode from her usual selection it makes mad'moiselle look another person."

Frankie dimpled delightedly. This was just what she wanted.

"Well," Mrs. Koenig conceded, with the air of one who feels fitness to be outraged, "of course it's a very handsome gown—for a woman of thirty. But on you, Frankie, I must say it looks absurd. It makes you look so—old."

"Only the young and beautiful should wear black," Frankie quoted, surveying with satisfaction the warm, plump ivory of her neck, and the perfect diminution of her arms from shoulder to fingertip.

"Of course, if you feel that way about it," said Mrs. Koenig, recovering her languor with an effort much like a snap. She was irritated with Frankie, because in that black gown the child had somehow managed to approach looking "grown up," suggesting dangerously that she might have to be reckoned with. She suspected Frankie of maliciously provoking her, but Frankie was only elated. It was partly to try the effect of that gown on a disinterested third party that she had made the appointment with Laura, and the effect to Frankie seemed promising.

"Now, don't be late," she reminded her friend affectionately, flirting the poodle's flossy ears. "One-thirty sharp."

Her eyes were snapping with excitement, and a pink spot of color showed on her cheeks as she ran down Madame Edourde's steps.

Though the bells and whistles of the city were all repeatedly shrieking out "One o'clock!" at her, she stopped once more at a florist's and bought a bunch of long-stemmed violets for the front of her gown before she picked her way across the wide, windy thoroughfare between the rattling market wagons and cable-cars to the threshold of the Palace Hotel.

"Mercy! I hope Lanse is late. It would be a horrid mistake to start off with him cross," she thought, as she pelted precipitately between the curtains of the "Turkish room," and, after a hasty glance around it, turned promptly to the mirror.

"He can't be cross," she murmured to the reflection, with a caressing touch to the violets.

"Caught in the act," said a voice behind her.

"Oh, no fair!" she cried blithely, whirling on him. "You were hiding."

"Only waiting in a dark corner," said Lansing King. He was rather unwillingly smiling at her, because among the dull colors and dusky lights of the room Frankie, in her light mode gown and white hat, with the ruddy aura of her hair above her little pointed face, and the dull purple splash of violets under her chin, was quite the prettiest thing he had ever seen. Frankie glanced up at his large proportions with wary admiration.

"I know you're wondering where Laura is," she began, unlooping her feather boa and flinging it over his arm, "and I've a confession to make, Mr. King. I've been a very naughty child."

The idea she didn't have to be considered as a young lady removed the last shred of his reluctance.

"You'll think it was awful of me, when you are so busy," Frankie went on, "but Laura isn't coming till one-thirty. I told you one sharp because—because there was something I very much wanted to ask you."

He looked down at the top of her hat, now thoroughly amused with her.

"Out with it, Miss Dutton, as one business man to another!"

Frankie came a little nearer. Her waist had a pretty, swaying motion that an enthusiastic undergraduate had likened to the swaying of a flower.

"I'm going to ask you," she murmured, "to do me a very great favor; and I hope you won't think it too silly. For, absolutely, I don't know any one else who would."

The note of nervous excitement in her voice struck him.

"Why, anything I could do, of course—" he began, and wondered what was coming next.

Frankie raised her candid, brown eyes.

"Then, would you mind my telling Laura to-day at luncheon that we're engaged?"

He gazed at her in speechless stupefaction.

"Don't look so scared, you goose!" she softly nudged him. "It's a joke, you see."

"Well, no; I rather don't," he muttered, beginning to recover.

"Oh, I suppose I'll have to tell you the whole thing!" she sighed, fluttering down into a chair. "I've got to make some one jealous. *Sabe?*" She pulled him by a little pinch of his sleeve to clinch his interest.

"Jealous?" He began to see it now, and to slowly grin at it. "But, my dear child, if you want that, why not get one of the college boys—some one who could do it justice, instead of an old duffer like me."

Frankie glanced up at the thick thatch of his gray hair, at the young gray eyes under it, then down at her small, white finger tracing patterns on her knee.

"Oh, but you're just the one who could," she said slowly. "You see, the man I want to make jealous is a—grown man, a business man; and he wouldn't take a college boy seriously. It would have to be some one nearer his own age and—er—accomplishments," she ended, with the vision of McCook mischievously in mind.

"But would he take me seriously?" Lansing King whimsically wanted to know.

"Why, of course he will," said Frankie triumphantly; "when he is in love a jealous man will believe anything. We don't want the rest to! For, don't you see?" she went on earnestly, leaning toward him—"if it really was a bit probable—*our* being engaged—it might get all over town that we *really* were, and that would be horrid."

"I don't see why it's so improbable—our being engaged," he commented a little irritably.

"Why," said Frankie, with wide-eyed amazement, "your age, for one thing."

"Thirty-three," said Lansing King shortly.

"Goodness gracious!" said Frankie. "Why, I never should have dreamed! I thought, of course, you must be forty—at least, Laura told me so."

He got up and shook himself like a big vexed dog. Covertly, anxiously, she watched him.

"Well, if I *look* forty," he pronounced resentfully, "I don't see what difference my actual age makes."

"That's true," Frankie cautiously agreed; "the effect would be the same—on the other man. For girls do get engaged to men old enough to be their fathers. But, of course," she ended consolingly, "your friends would all know it was a joke!"

He looked at her with dubious discontent.

"And this other man? He turns up at luncheon, I suppose?"

She shook her head at him.

"Now, I won't tell you another thing," she declared, jumping up. "You'll see it perfectly the minute we get started."

"But I say," he protested, "you haven't told me what I've got to do!"

"Why, just back me up—follow your leader. You don't mind, do you? Oh, you are a duck!" She gave his arm an exuberant little squeeze and flew for the door.

It was the rustle of a woman's dress approaching down the hall that had spurred on Frankie's demands and brought her bargain to such a speedy

conclusion. She met Mrs. Koenig at the portière.

"You wicked thing! We're perfectly starving, and we've waited at least five whole minutes!"

"It's just one-thirty," said Mrs. Koenig suavely. "Howdy do, Lanse." She gave Mr. King her indolent fingertips.

"Then the only fast thing about Mr. King is his watch," said Frankie nonchalantly, but inwardly her heart gave a fierce little jump to hear Laura so carelessly throw about that first name she didn't care a pin for. Frankie knew the old gossip that Laura Colton, an experienced belle of twenty-nine, had all but landed Lansing King, a wary youth of twenty-two, and though it was all ages past, and Laura's attitude toward him was shading gently into the maternal, she was still apt to rub it in on occasions that she was the only woman Lansing King had ever taken seriously. The idea was maddening enough, Frankie reflected, as she descended the stairs into the grill, that it was that early scare Laura had given him that had made Lanse so extremely difficult ever since.

The big room, rosily lighted by clusters of pink candle-shades, with the orchestra gustily sighing "Violets" on the dais at the distant end, was already fairly filled with lunchers, and numerous flowery hats nodded to them, passing to their places. Frankie noted with amusement how Lansing King's glance traveled uncertainly here and there, as if trying to fix suspicion on one or another of the occasional sack coats. She saw him with an impatient head-shake repudiate Barry More, to whom every débutante at one time or another had been engaged, just as she herself, with a little beckoning and the aid of a waiter, had succeeded in attracting the attention of a fair, fattish young man over whom Lansing's search had slipped unheeding.

"Why, there's Mr. McCook!" She appeared to have just discovered him. "Do let's have him over!"

Mrs. Koenig's surprise was tinged with suspicion. Frankie was not ac-

customed to welcome the appearance of this person with such effusion. But to-day everything about Frankie was inexplicable.

"Why, this is an unexpected pleasure!" she cried; and, seeing it on the tip of his tongue to suggest why unexpected, since she had asked him, she went on at top speed: "You must sit down with us—why, yes, surely you must. It would be just a jolly four-some!"

Lansing was watching her with the indulgent smile of one watching a playing kitten, a very pretty kitten. No glimmer of the significance of McCook's presence had dawned upon him. He simply didn't dream it.

"I suppose the other chap'll pay for the drinks in the end," he murmured, with an eye on the wine list.

"Oh, of course," said Frankie, "but this is your treat. Laura"—she called her friend's attention—"Lanse wants to know what you would like to drink?"

The aside whisper, the first name, each made its little impression on Mrs. Koenig, but only caused her to bend on Frankie a faintly reproving frown, such as one might give the caprice of a child. Now, Frankie had expected that. She waited—waited until the appearance of what Mrs. Koenig liked to drink had smoothed out any attitude of reproof, and had rendered her extremely affable; waited until Laura was well going and very much interested in what she was saying, before she slipped out her little remark, the expectation of which had kept Lansing King sitting on the edge of his chair since luncheon began.

"By the way, Laura—I think I meant to tell you before—Lansing and I are engaged."

Mrs. Koenig gave her one annoyed glance and went on with what she was saying. Lansing looked hurriedly at Frankie, but she seemed in no way crestfallen at this cavalier reception of her news. She only smiled and stretched out her little toes under the table until one of them delicately touched Lansing King's.

"Lanse and I are engaged," she repeated languidly.

Mr. McCook's mouth, just open to receive a sweetbread, remained round and fixed. Mrs. Koenig stopped and stared.

"Don't be silly!" she said impatiently. "Well, how do you like that?" Frankie appealed to King. "She thinks we're silly!"

"Oh, come!" he protested, valiantly rising to the situation. "Don't be rough on me, Laura. You don't really think I'm a bad investment?"

Mrs. Koenig colored angrily, and Frankie, mindful of ancient history, choked.

"I haven't the least idea what the joke is," said Mrs. Koenig, with asperity.

"It's a joke, of course," urged McCook, who was looking a little anxious and trying to catch Frankie's eye.

"Of course it's a joke," she said gaily; "but it's true for all that. Still, if you don't believe us, why"—she raised her glass to Lansing King—"here's to the better congratulations in the future!"

"Lanse," Mrs. Koenig indignantly protested, leaning across the table so precipitately as to spill her glass, "you're *not* engaged to Frankie!"

"Why, of course I am." His note of sincerity sprang involuntarily to combat her incredulity. "Why shouldn't I be?"

"It's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of," Mrs. Koenig gasped.

"I don't see anything ridiculous in it," he protested, with something like irritation. "Just what is it about me, Laura, that strikes you as so especially impossible?"

"Not you, Lanse—me," Frankie put in calmly. "I'm too young, frivolous, and foolish to be engaged to any one but an undergrad. Mr. McCook, your glass is empty. Won't you—" and as the waiter's bulk screened her from Lansing King she winked meaningly at McCook. This was to keep him quiet. She didn't want him to prematurely attract Lansing King's suspicions. It was too soon for that.

"I suppose it was your wedding-gown you were trying on this morning," said

Mrs. Koenig maliciously, sipping champagne.

"Oh, Laura, don't be so slow," Frankie objected. "As if weddings ran after engagements!"

The effect of this speech on Lansing was to remove his last vestige of fear and make him slightly reckless.

"Don't pile a wedding-gown on top of our romance so quickly," he warned. "You'll frighten Frankie."

Her toe under the table told him he was doing splendidly. Her method of telegraphy was new to him, and somehow elating.

"Yes, I'm still waiting for tea-cups and congratulations," she announced, staring forbiddingly at McCook's appealing glances. "There's Edna Wally," she added, waving her gloves at an approaching group.

Edna was the most credulous creature in San Francisco. She would swallow anything she was told. Frankie caught the fat little debutante by the sleeve.

"Come here a minute, Edna. You know Mrs. Koenig—you've met Mr. McCook. I want to introduce my fiancé, Mr. King. Mr. King, Miss Wally. Oh, Miss Covington"—she detained the tall debutante who was passing on—"Miss Covington, let me—" She caught sight of McCook's red glare, and knew she was going to laugh—there was no help for it—but Edna Wally saved the situation.

"Engaged!" she burst out. "Why, Frankie Dutton! Why, I—how perfectly lovely! I'm *sure* I congratulate you—I *mean*, congratulate Mr. King," she ended, blushing.

Lansing shouted, and Barry More, coming up behind, raised his voice to know what the row was about.

"Come on," King greeted him. "You're going to drink my health. Turn in steel? Nonsense! My fiancée, Miss Dutton. Waiter"—his voice fell to a murmur—"bring another of that—"

For a moment Frankie gazed at him in awful admiration.

"Well, well!" she heard Barry saying. "This is too bad to be true!"

"Isn't it, though?" said Frankie, looking squarely into his skeptical twinkle.

In her wildest hopes she had never dreamed that Lanse could fly so high. She herself had discreetly chosen chattering nobodies; but Barry More, Bessy Jaffry, the people who would know what you were up to or they would know the reason why—it was play up or die.

Mrs. Koenig and Mr. McCook found themselves the center of a circle of chattering pandemonium—chairs drawn up behind their chairs, fresh glasses coming in in the hands of waiters, toasts to some vague future felicity being drunk, and the mushroom growth of Frankie's small remark increasing to a size that overshadowed them all with its startling verity. The reiterant "we are," "we intend," "Lanse thinks," that dropped from Frankie's lips operated with a singular, hypnotizing effect not only on the ears of the mystified McCook and Mrs. Koenig and the circle about them, but on Lansing King's as well. Frankie's hand, that now and then touched his arm, brought a warmer glimmer into his cold gray eyes. He was acting his part so well that he had forgotten to wonder where the other man came in; perhaps it had even slipped his mind that there was another man at all.

But Frankie was far from forgetting it; and, casting wary glances at McCook, she saw that his perturbation would not be self-contained much longer; saw, too, that Barry More, keen as a whiplash, was already scenting something in the wind; saw, in short, that it was time to get away, now, while the illusion was still perfect, and—here was the struggle—to take Laura with her. Laura mustn't be left alone with Lansing for five minutes. It must be done somehow, and done quickly. She looked at her watch, and her little scream commanded the babel of voices.

"Laura Koenig, do you know what time it is! Three o'clock! We'll miss the second act!"

"Oh, well, I don't care," Mrs. Koenig sulkily began.

"Oh, yes, you do, dear. The next act is the naughty one. We'll just have to race!" Frankie jumped to her feet. "Lanse, run and get us a cab, there's a duck! Yes, Laura, it's blowing cats and dogs;" and she kept her finger tentatively on Laura's arm, who had looked for a moment as if she meant to rush away after Lansing King.

They were both still the center of the hand-shaking, chattering group when Lansing reappeared, and Frankie fancied, as she watched him coming down the aisle, that his eye rested for a moment with a hostile curiosity on McCook, red as a turkey-cock, ruffling at her elbow.

"Let me see you to the carriage," McCook was muttering, with a furious glance at the man bearing down upon them.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. McCook," Frankie replied in her artless chirp; "but, really, I mustn't take you away from your friends;" and all the while she was proceeding with him down the aisle in the direction of the approaching Lansing King. "My fiancé will see me to the carriage," she was ending just as they caught up to him.

McCook took him in head and heels. "Really, Miss Dutton," he stiffly announced, "I fail to see your joke!"

The eyes of the rivals met, as it were, with a clash, and Frankie, a little scared, saw suspicion leap to conviction in Lansing King's. He took it in at one gasp, like a terrible pill. *This* was the man whom he had—whom Frankie was going to—but had he—was she? No! it was impossible, for hadn't she said—Frankie felt her arm seized and herself swept away down the aisle. As he rushed her along the hall to the carriage entrance, "Frankie, it's not *that* man?" Lansing King muttered.

She laughed.

"But what difference does that make to you?" she murmured, and fled across the sidewalk to the waiting cab.

He caught her as she placed one foot on the step.

"But it does. See here—he's not—I mean, am I?" he stammered.

"Who said so?" said Frankie coolly;

then, with her lips close to his ear, she whispered: "Hold fast all I give you."

"You imp!" he muttered, and thrust her into her seat like a refractory kitten, just as Laura came out, towing the sulky McCook, and switched into the carriage with a cool nod to Lansing.

At ten o'clock the next morning the Duttons' telephone rang a mad peal, and Frankie, who in the reaction of tight-strung nerves had cried all night, flew down-stairs in her bed-gown to answer it.

"It's probably only one of the girls," she told herself in her fear of being disappointed, but the curt, hurried voice at the other end of the line relieved her last night's conviction of never, never seeing or hearing Lansing King again.

"Yes," she brought out in her high chirp; "this is Miss Dutton. Who is it, please? Mr. King? Oh! Engaged? *We?* Why, I don't understand you!" She listened a moment; then: "Really, I can't discuss it over the telephone this morning! No! Ye—es, to-night, at half-past eight." And to avoid further embarrassing questions Frankie firmly hung up the receiver. She turned with a little skip, and remained frozen in her gyration at the sight of her mother occupying the dining-room doorway. Perplexed and suspicious, she regarded her daughter's excited face.

"Frankie, was that Mr. McCook telephoning?"

Frankie shrugged.

"What if it was?"

"He was trying to propose to you over the telephone," Mrs. Dutton announced, with a face that struggled between disapproval and gratification.

"He was not, mama; but I think," said Frankie cautiously, "he might try to propose to me somewhere else if he were given the opportunity."

"I am going to the Channing auxiliary to-night," Mrs. Dutton hinted, as she retreated into the dining-room.

Frankie stood, considering. The name of McCook, recalling that individual to her mind, had made her wonder if he were not imminently likely to ring her up; and if it came to who might ring

her up that day—well, it was more a question of who mightn't. She slipped into her father's study, and, extracting from the writing-desk an infinitesimal eraser, slipped the rubber pellet under the telephone-bell.

"If any one calls for me to-day, Marikka," she murmured to the housemaid, "remember, I'm not at home." And, thus barricaded against public curiosity, she departed smiling to erase the traces of vain tears.

Lansing King was prompt to his appointment—eight-thirty to the minute—but he was kept walking up and down the drawing-room for ten extra ones—long enough to accumulate anxiety and impatience, long enough to give his fancy time to flirt with the idea of what was coming, when Frankie trailed in.

For a moment he didn't speak, only looked at the extraordinary little apparition coming slowly toward him down the softly lit room, as if she were the strangest part of the incomprehensible business. The round curves of her neck rose like warm ivory from the low, black corselet, whose every scale caught a gleam of light; and her hair, not at all the usual casual puff, but that low-drawn, curled, red hair, with a diamond's flash somewhere in the coil of it, and the long, black, sinuous train, gave her a queer air of innocent sophistication, of mature youth, captivating in its contrast, provoking in its piquancy.

"Well!" he said at last.

"Howdy do," said Frankie in a drowned little voice—the voice of mental exhaustion.

And Lansing, who had come expecting to be precipitately questioned, found himself asking:

"What on earth's the matter?"

"I really don't understand," said Frankie, putting her hand to her forehead. "What was it you wanted to ask me over the telephone? There seems to have been some misunderstanding yesterday."

"Misunderstanding!" he gloomed. "I should think so. What I want to know is what I'm to say to these people?"

"What do you mean?" Frankie demanded, with fine surprise.

"That every man who's been in my office since nine o'clock this morning has congratulated me, and every woman I know has rung me up to know if it's true!"

"Oh, dear!" Frankie wailed. "And you didn't deny it?"

"How could I, when I'd been saying I was, and letting people drink my health? That was your end of it. Why didn't you deny it—if you wanted it denied?" he frowned at her.

"I—I was out all day! And I never dreamed it would be like this! Oh, why did you tell Barry More?"

"Good heavens! didn't you tell me to back you up?" the goaded man demanded. "You told those women we were engaged, and you did it so confidently as if you meant it—you made me think you meant it."

"I didn't, I didn't!" Frankie fiercely denied. "I told you from the very first in the Tu—turkish room, that it was a joke; that—that there was another man—"

"Hang the other man!" stormed Lansing King. "That's not the point!" and while Frankie stared electrified at this unexpected turn of the matter, "The point is," he went on, towering in front of her, "that you got me started—Oh, I don't suppose you knew it," he added, with a magnanimity that made Frankie want to sink through the floor—"I dare say you started in fun—but we got pretty well balled up before we were through with it—now, didn't we?"

"Well, say we both did it! We did, then!" Frankie cried. "But, anyway, it's done!" and she flung herself into a chair, inconsequently crying:

"Oh, what shall we do?"

"There's only one thing to do," Lansing King triumphantly pointed out to her. "*Be engaged*. Eh?" he added anxiously. "Why not?"

"You mean," Frankie faltered, "temporarily—until it blows over?"

"Temporarily be—er—h'm," said Lansing King gloomily. "I suppose so, if you'd rather; but don't you think you might—get used to it?"

THE TRUTH

BY MAY HARRIS



AND do you know, he never said a word!"

"Really! But what was there left for him to say?"

"Well, if he *carded*, I should say a good deal!"

"But shouldn't you think that she'd, in that case, give him the credit of lying?"

"Well, at least she'd see that he cared!"

"Enough to lie!"

Mrs. Archer regarded her husband with an irritated discouragement.

"Don't you see that as he didn't care enough to even pretend—to try to gloss over things at all—that she's right if she doesn't forgive him?"

"For not lying?"

"How *can* you? It isn't a subject to jest about. Editha's horribly unhappy."

"How about Browne?"

"I don't care in the *least* how he feels!"

"Well, as he's a man, I'll have to sympathize a little with him, just to even things up. You see, I know your side—I mean, Editha's side; but I haven't heard *his* yet."

"That's an insinuation, I suppose, that he's too honorable to talk about it!"

"At least," her husband ventured cautiously, "I haven't heard him."

"If he had a *shadow* of an excuse——"

"Why don't you say 'a leg to stand on'!"

"Well, a leg to stand on, then! If he *had*, he'd have explained——"

"Explained! Good Lord, Katherine! How can he explain? Explain

what? That he used to care for another woman before he met Editha! So he did, perhaps; so does every other man. So"—boldly—"did I—before I met you."

"But you haven't a picture of one of *them*, that you keep in your desk to—*to* gloat over!"

"Did Browne 'gloat'? Well, anyway, his desk was better than if he'd worn it round his neck by a string."

"You've no sentiment!"

"Oceans!"—comfortably—"but no hidden treasures in my desk to gloat over."

"Oh, I know *that*."

"How?"

"Well"—airily—"I made sure one rainy day when you weren't here."

"My dear," Archer murmured, "suppose some sunshiny day when you weren't in, I should go through your desk to see if there were any incriminating memento of days before I knew you?"

"But you wouldn't find any," she answered naively. "I burned them all the day before I married."

"Exactly," he said gravely. "Well, Browne forgot to do that. And Editha had no business—this is not to your address, my dear, as it seems I had no incriminating evidence—she had no business, I repeat, to go into her husband's closet, if she wasn't prepared to see a skeleton."

"But think how she felt!"

"Think how *he* felt when he found his wife distrustful of him."

Katherine looked troubled. "But you know, Jimmy, I—looked, too!"

Archer groaned.

"And you want me to understand it's the eternal feminine! But *your* riddle didn't exist. If it had, we'd have been

tearing our hair like Editha and Browne."

"Editha is not tearing her hair! Why do you look at so serious a thing as merely ludicrous? If you knew Editha as I do, you'd know she is heart-broken!"

"Heart-broken! Simply because Browne didn't burn up the picture of a pretty girl he used to know, when he married?"

"You can't enter into it," Mrs. Archer said impatiently, pushing about a vase of carnations on the table. "Men don't understand. It wasn't the bare fact of his having her picture; if he'd had *bushels* of them in an ordinary way——"

"Well, what's the extraordinary thing about *this*?"

"It was locked away in the bottom of a *secret* drawer."

"It couldn't have been successfully secret"—Archer allowed himself the flippancy—"since Editha found it."

"It was locked away," Katherine pursued, "in a beautiful sandalwood box—the kind of box one would only put away a treasure in—and the picture wasn't an ordinary picture—not a photograph. It was a miniature *exquisitely* painted and set with pearls. Editha said it was the most beautiful thing she'd ever seen."

"And yet she blamed him for keeping it!"

"I meant the *work*, the pearls—not the *face*!"

"Wasn't it pretty, too?"

Katherine hesitated. "I didn't see it, you know. Editha said it was very fair—the doll-baby type—blue eyes and fair hair."

"And Editha's a sort of midnight houri, isn't she?"

"I don't see how you can see anything *funny* in this! It's dreadfully serious for poor Editha."

"What became of the apple of discord?"

"The miniature? Oh, he put it back in the drawer and locked it, and put the key in his pocket."

"Well, Editha didn't want him to give it to her?"

"Do you suppose she'd *touch* it?"

"Well, Editha ought to remember——"

When the apple reddens

Never pry,

Lest we lose our Eden,
Eve and I."

"And I suppose he's to keep the picture undisturbed, to—to worship!"

"Well, if he didn't do it openly, with abandon! You see, she'd never had reason to suspect its existence before she looked into his belongings."

"That's the very thing that hurts so dreadfully. She thought, poor dear, that she was the first—the real one."

"Few people"—Archer tempted fate with the wisdom—"are ever the first! Hadn't they better be satisfied with the second or third place, provided they are the real one?"

"But that's just it. How can Editha be satisfied, when she finds there's somebody before her, in the first place—perhaps the *real* place—and set with pearls?"

For some mysterious feminine reason, this last point had a weight of emphasis.

"Pretty bad," Archer agreed, with cheerful brutality. "He'd have to have *hers*—Editha's—set with diamonds to make up."

But Katherine clung to the pearls.

"It's the sentiment of pearls. Pearls are symbolical of *tears*."

"Well, perhaps she's dead."

"Don't you see that makes it *worse*? All the more hopeless for *her*! A man might get over caring for a woman who's alive—you could make yourself so much sweeter and brighter that he couldn't *help* loving you the best. But a dead woman! She has the best of it *always*! There's no possibility of comparison."

"No. 'Forever wilt thou love and she be fair,'" Archer quoted under his breath.

"Oh"—his wife caught the murmur with a transfixing gleam—"you agree! He has a *right*, then, to his past?"

"Has a woman a right to a man's past as well as his present and his future?"

"If *that's* the way you look at things——!" She held her head high.

"Not in our case. We're exempt. I've no past—as you've proved—and I look to you to make my future, just as you make my present."

He smiled up at her with content behind his quizzical playfulness; and her hand dropped to his shoulder, where it rested a moment in a fleeting caress.

"But think," she went back, "what it means to Editha!"

"How much is she going to let it mean?"

Katherine considered.

"I'm afraid to think. She's—she feels it very deeply."

"But surely she's cared for Browne all this time—he's made her care?"

"Ye-es."

"Don't you think if he could do that—make her care—that he's accomplished the biggest thing to her—all that really matters? If he's been unhappy, poor devil, is it any reason why he shouldn't be allowed another chance? Especially if he's fairly deserved the one he has! I take it he's made Editha believe he cared for her."

"Oh, yes, he did! And that's the trouble—the dreadful part. She's sure to feel he's deceived her."

"But he hasn't! How can she pretend to question the quality of his affection now, simply when she's found out he hadn't walked the earth in melancholy madness before her advent!"

"Oh, it's his caring so deeply—and remembering!"

"Would she rather he was the type of man who couldn't really care, and who'd forget?"

Katherine was silent.

"You say he didn't deny anything—

that he didn't say anything. What sort of a man would he have been if he'd done either? He couldn't tell his wife what he thought of her—curiosity; and he couldn't, and wouldn't, deny the value—perhaps in every way of the past—of the thing she wanted him to trample on."

"To trample on!—what an idea!"

"What else?"

She thought it over.

"She'd only want him to acknowledge he'd outgrown the other. That *she*—Editha—filled all his need now."

"And the miniature? Wouldn't she then allow it to him as a sort of tombstone effigy?"

"Jimmy! what a horrid thought! If it remained *that* way, it would be a ghost between them."

"But personally *his* ghost, my dear! and there would always remain the fact that but for her intrusion, he'd never have let her know. Since she looked—well, she found—"

"The truth!"—his wife gave it a dramatic effect.

"Well"—with a gesture he let her take it at its best or worst—"the truth!"

Over its acceptance she had, however, a final head-shake.

"It won't be—I think I can foresee—a ghost that will really haunt them."

"Because"—Archer saw the triumphant finish—"she'll see that in spite of the prelude—and the pearls—he really loves *her*!"

"It won't be that so much"—her gravity dashed his gay conclusion—"as that she'll always love him too much to let him see how much it hurts her!"



EL DORADO

O GOLDEN heart, from whom sweet bounties come,
Not through these noble gifts you hold my due
Am I grown richest; but in blessed sum
Of little things you let me do for you.

ALDIS DUNBAR.

GRIM-VISAGED WAR

by Anna A

Rogers



DURING those early tragic days in Manila, now lightly referred to as "the days of the empire," there was a condition of perpetual panic coexistent with a condition of perpetual laughter.

To have outwardly taken any one of the alarms seriously would have endangered one's social standing; that privately now and then one was differently regarded, there is existing evidence.

Mrs. Parksberry had laughed with the others through them all. She had waxed merry over the several manifestos ordering the extermination by assassination of all Americans, male or female, in or about the city. She even had one of them brought to her by the colonel as a souvenir of these numerous poisonous toadstools that grew in a night all over the city, to be uprooted with jeers at dawn by the American soldiers.

She had been especially jocund about the stampede known as the Panic of the Mad Dog, which cleared the Luneta and adjacent streets in five minutes—no one knew why for about eighteen hours. A dog ran, a man fearing hydrophobia ran away from the dog—the rest was chaos! Coachmen madly beating their horses flying in all directions; women screaming to them to go faster; men pale and rigid, with their hands on their hip pockets. The only result was that very few of the army women got down the bay that afternoon to the dance on the historic flag-ship, and so the navy women had a much better time.

Then, too, there were the numerous panics of the Ayuntamiento solely in behalf of the American women—who persisted in coming—twice exiling them for days on a transport; for which parental solicitude the dozen women were lamentably lacking in common gratitude.

Then, one day, of all people, Mrs. Parksberry had a panic of her own! She never referred to it, largely because her many friends preferred to regard her solely in a humorous light, and this time her generally rampant sense of humor was in complete abeyance.

Her private scare had its roots in ravening hunger. Not that that very common condition during the days of the Spanish cuisine would of itself have served to mark the event, but certain after-eventualities stenciled February 4, 1899, clearly upon her memory.

It was Saturday, about half-past three o'clock, when Mrs. Parksberry's sudden attack of post-meridian hunger became too insistent to be ignored.

She was a wise old pioneer by that time; she had been through the period of raging because there were no bells in the hotel from top to bottom; been through the stage of trying to reform things; she no longer clapped her hands in the resounding corridor during the hours of the servants' siesta. She now knew that they were lying asleep, or smoking, on the floor in obscure lairs, out of the line of traffic and ostensibly out of hearing; knew, too, that when they heard the summons they only laughed and mocked at the excitable *Americanos*, who imagined they were going to introduce their own queer ways of doing things.

There was but one way of getting bread in that hotel in those times, and it was not by asking for it, but by sallying forth in her kimono and straw sandals and getting it for herself. She shuffled along down the hall to the back dining-room door in search of a certain ball of rocklike bread always to be found upon her table, even during sweeping-hours; likewise her own individual pot of Scotch marmalade, more or less successfully insulated from the tiny enterprising ants, in a soup-plate full of water.

As her toilet, though becoming, did not admit of the grand détour around the corridor to the other door, Mrs. Parksberry slid in through the huge butler's pantry.

A Filipino "boy," rather more heavily built than his spare nation, was lying on his back on the floor across the inner door leading to the dining-room; his knees were up, and he was smoking a cigarette.

He was unaware of the American woman's approach until her kimono touched him; then with a spring like a tiger he was on his feet and faced her, barring the entrance with one arm, at the same time giving a low, birdlike whistle.

When he stood, Mrs. Parksberry saw that it was the "new boy" who had only come within a week. He was lame and spoke a little English, and evidently had in him some European blood, probably Portuguese.

"Watter does the señora li-i-ke?" quoth he.

"The señora wants some *pan*, y un plato, y una cuchara, y my—my jam of *marañas*, y—"

"*Caramba! son las tres y media, señora*," was the astounding reply, and was it possible his dark eyes were twinkling?

"*Caramba!* I don't care if it is two in the morning," stormed Mrs. Parksberry, a sudden rage taking possession of her underfed being. "Put down your arm or I'll call Don Miguel!"

She felt assured, when he stepped aside, that it was in response to that something in her Anglo-Saxon eyes

and voice which so successfully dominates all nations of the world; and she swept on into the great darkened dining-room, full of white-draped tables, each canopied by its silent, dust-colored punkah.

An amazing sight met her quick glance. Every *muchacho* and *amah* in the hotel was crouched in a corner on the floor in a ring about the head boy, Juan, a man whose strong, coarse face was deeply pitted by smallpox.

Two candles were burning before Juan, and his head was bent low, reading in Tagalaw aloud from a paper the exact size of Mrs. Parksberry's manifesto! The circle of dark faces listened eagerly, with staring eyes and parted lips; and suddenly they became to her a lot of savages plotting murder in a jungle. A sharp hiss from the "new boy" came from behind Mrs. Parksberry, and then, again, that rather belated whistle of alarm.

The candles were instantly blown out; the white-clad figures darted right and left with lowered heads, and in the twilight of the great empty *comedor* Juan sprang toward the American woman, asking what it was she wanted. In that instant was born Mrs. Parksberry's panic! The latent insurgent rebellion, at which she had merrily giped all winter long, suddenly assumed portentous proportions; the lugubrious strictures of the Ayuntamiento were justified, after all!

She had to moisten her lips before she could answer Juan. Her hunger was fading away with each tremendous heart-beat.

It is not easy to look imposing in a short cotton kimono, but the flash in her blue eyes made up for deficiencies of toilet, and Juan, the Filipino, after measuring her a moment, turned and obeyed her.

She took the occasion to leave the dining-room at once and stand near the hall door in the butler's pantry, from which even the "new boy" had fled. She was conscious of a rooted objection to presenting her unprotected back to Juan.

A general massacre has got to begin

with a knife in some one person's back, and at the moment Mrs. Parksberry had a moral certainty of belief that fate had decreed that it should be hers. In addition to more personal objections to that honor being thrust upon her, she harbored a strong disrelish for leaving Captain Tom Parksberry of the navy a widower, reacting in that particular climate from twenty years of steady matrimony.

So it came to pass that Juan only obtained a profile view of the gray-haired American lady, until, bearing the little tray he had brought her, she arrived at her own door.

Having abandoned the tray with a crash, and locked her door, she communed aloud to herself, as she rapidly dressed:

"I wouldn't have anybody even suspect how wobbly I feel, for worlds, and solar systems of worlds! And as to laughing—I shall probably never even smile again during the few hours of living left me! My spinal-cord already knows the taste of Juan's knife—it's just a matter of time! And then, of course, Tom, after several years of riotous living *en garçon*, will marry that lazy, stupid, ox-eyed, perfectly horrid cousin of his—just because she's the exact opposite of me! She has no more figure! Just a great, bulbous mass of *écru* flesh, and about as much sense of humor as—as a turnip. Oh, but you'll come some day, Thomas Parksberry, to recall with regret a certain woman who, with all her faults of temper, never, never, never bored you—and you know it!"

It is almost impossible to credit it, but Kate Parksberry dashed two large tears out of her eyes at this pathetic point; such is the effect of the tropics upon feminine nerves! When, happily, a sudden thought inspired and diverted her.

The scene she had just stumbled on in the dining-room was evidence! It should forthwith be reported to the Bureau of Secret Information at the other end of the corridor.

As she was about to open her door, she bethought herself of a twenty-two-

caliber pistol which the colonel had given her for a philopena present, at the possession of which she had, until that moment, been very facetious. The acuteness of her panic may be measured by the fact that she opened the drawer of her night-table and drew it forth. Could it be possible that all along he had considered it wise that she should have such a thing near at hand?

Opening her door, she walked rapidly down the deserted hall to the other corner, where was the office of the government bureau.

Directly opposite she was terrified to find crouched on the bentwood settee the white figure of Juan, the Filipino! He had seen, even more quickly than she had, just where she would bring her information. As she approached he arose, thinking thus to intimidate her, but he had yet much to learn about blue-eyed women. After she had knocked on the door of the office, she stood again presenting her profile to the Filipino, and was apparently absorbed in polishing the muzzle of her little pistol with her scrap of a handkerchief; wondering, meanwhile, how one found out, without firing it, whether a pistol was loaded or not.

Out of the corner of her right eye she saw Juan, the Filipino, turn and disappear around the corner, and then she heard steps approaching across the bare floor within the office, and a voice cry: "*Entrar!*"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Parksberry! I'm afraid I kept you waiting. I was taking down a piece of rather exciting news, just brought in by a United States spy, and I couldn't break away. What can I do for you? The captain is not in." It was the civilian chief clerk who spoke, and to him, still standing, she rapidly told her story. She was not far along in her tale, which she considered an extremely impressive one, when she observed what she supposed was a derogatory smile come into his face, whereat her always quick temper took prompt umbrage.

She stopped speaking, an instant of silence followed, and then she blazed out, turning to leave the office:

"Even if the office does not consider my story of any value, the real value of it, nevertheless, remains to be disproved!"

"If I have given you that idea, madam, I beg your pardon," the man cried in dismay, knowing that she was a great favorite of his chief. "Please wait a minute, Mrs. Parksberry! I want to prove to you how accurate your intuitions are in this matter. Number Seven!" he shouted.

From one of the other rooms, whence military tentacles crept forth feeling about for secrets in high places and in low, a Filipino entered slowly, with a limp. To Mrs. Parksberry's amazement, it proved to be the "new boy," who had been, a half-hour back, lying across the threshold of the dining-room. The smile he gave as his eyes met Mrs. Parksberry's lifted the disguise from the keen, lean, nervous face—no Malay ever looked like that!

"This man, Mrs. Parksberry, is one of the government spies, acting, however, on some secret mission not connected with this bureau, and he has just very generously put our office in possession of exactly the story you have so thoughtfully brought to us. There is no doubt whatever that the rebellion is about to break out—possibly tonight. You happened on a very valuable piece of corroborative evidence, Mrs. Parksberry. Mr. —" The spy coughed with a sudden flash of temper in his stained face, and she lost the name. "Number Seven says there will never be any massacre," ended the clerk smoothly, his face flushing.

The secret-service man in native dress bowed smilingly to the naval officer's wife, and then turned and limped back to the room from whence he came. And Mrs. Parksberry never again saw the "new boy"—to her knowledge.

The law of gravitation was barely able to keep Katharine Parksberry down on the oiled and polished mahogany floors as she stalked proudly back to her own room. So it was a very sharp transition from the sublime to the ridiculous to find little Gormly knocking on her door.

There was no real objection to the little English middy except extreme youth, extreme blondness, and extreme plumpness, and for none of these qualities could he in common justice be held responsible.

Mrs. Parksberry felt that it was probably largely owing to the climate that she found his persistently cherubic smile exasperating.

That he openly adored Captain Felter's daughter only added, at least in the eyes of the men, to his general absurdity.

And yet, the discouraging thing about it all was that, in the end, one found oneself immensely liking the youngster.

"I came to call on Miss Felter," was his smiling greeting.

"How startling!" commented Mrs. Parksberry, with grimness, passing him and entering her own door. "She lives two doors beyond. Good afternoon."

"Oh, I say, don't go in, Mrs. Parksberry!"

"But you said you came to call on her. What on earth have I to do with it?"

"Mrs. Felter says her daughter can't come out just yet."

"Oh, so I'm to fill in a few starving moments for you!"

"Now, that's awfully clever, you know, the way you see right through a fellow!" he burst out, beaming upon her.

"Aren't you glad you didn't go in for diplomacy as a career, Mr. Gormly?" gently inquired Mrs. Parksberry.

"Rather! I was frightfully obstinate about the navy, and after I came home for the long holidays, two years ago, the mater took my side against the governor, and he gave it up."

Suddenly nothing seemed worth while to Mrs. Parksberry but to be kind and motherly to the boy.

"Come," she cried, "we'll sit out here in the corridor, the sooner to see her when she appears. I suppose you have not very long ashore. Now, tell me, isn't she the very prettiest thing you ever laid eyes upon?"

After that all she had to do was to listen to his small vocabulary persist-

ently and precipitately exploited. Once when Mrs. Felter's door opened, little Gormly stopped in his headlong career with a gasp, and then Mrs. Felter's bass voice boomed forth: "He's still there!" And little Gormly read the incident one way and Mrs. Parksberry read it another way, knowing how ambitious was that mother for her beautiful daughter.

Then, a moment later, a radiant presence all white and gold floated toward them, and it was Lucille Felter, Christianized Lucinda during her disappointingly unattractive babyhood.

Little Gormly stood up and pulled down his blouse, and unconsciously whispered under his breath: "My God!" And Mrs. Parksberry, with a lump in her distinctly hysterical throat, got up and went away, pretending a horror of cats, for, of course, Cato was close at her heels, while the clear whistle of her other pet, the magpie, came out through her open door.

II.

That night the insurrection broke out, and the first shots were exchanged between the Filipinos and the great, good-natured power of which they had gathered so erroneous an impression.

After dinner the Felters, mother and daughter; Mrs. Parksberry, Mrs. Dy-sork, and several other women, were sitting with a lot of men in the red-satin salon, kept jealously closed until seven o'clock.

Gormly, who had leave till quarters the next morning, had driven with Lucille and her mother all the afternoon on the Luneta, and dined with them, very little overawed by the girl's antagonistic parent. He still had the golden-haired siren cornered to his satisfaction in the salon, a little apart from the others, and he was whispering to her his bi-weekly appeal to marry him offhand to-morrow, and she was leaning back in her white gauze evening gown, fanning herself with one hand and rubbing Cato, who was asleep upon her knees, with the other.

"Two such perfectly outrageous

blondes as we are, Mr. Gormly! You must see for yourself how impossible it would be. Imagine how we'd look together, and the simply sickening names we'd be sure to be called."

"Who cares a ha'penny about names and such rot as that!"

"Mama does, for one. No, Mr. Gormly, I'll tell you frankly it cannot be. But if, as time goes on, you would only turn one or two shades darker, *then*— However, I shall probably never marry." She was absorbed at the moment in making a figure eight out of the sleeping Cato's black tail, when three shots in quick succession sounded out in the plaza, followed by a tremendous crash as the great front door was slammed violently to down below.

Cato sprang ten feet off from Lucille's lap and scuttled away, every hair on end.

Then, of course, the little group of Americans laughed, as that was the orthodox thing to do in face of a fresh panic. But the men exchanged quick glances that were far from jovial, and the women's hearts jumped about in the most disorderly fashion, however game they looked in the face.

Then the colonel got up and said languidly:

"I'll see what it's all about. Some recruit has got a nightmare, probably." He went out into the hall, and in an instant returned, laughing heartily.

"Ladies, come out here and see for yourselves. The Ayuntamiento has another panic!"

At the head of the broad stairway stood two American soldiers with grounded muskets. About the two men, palpably volunteers, their countrywomen gathered, wondering.

"We're under orders from headquarters to escort the American ladies to a place of safety, sir," said one of the soldiers to the colonel solemnly.

"Oh, how picturesque!" cried Lucille, and the two young soldiers, already white with excitement and frozen stiff with military responsibilities, looked at her with outraged eyes. Gormly, mindful of his opportunities,

and also dreading unknown dangers, quietly took possession of one of Lucille's hands. For an instant the small witch pretended to be unaware of the liberty, then, knowing that he would expect it of her, she suddenly withdrew her hand and flashed indignant eyes in his direction.

"Have we time to pack?" asked Mrs. Parksberry dryly, nothing if not practical.

"No, ma'am; we're ordered to take you at once to the captain of the port, who is to send you out to a transport."

"Our regiment is ordered out," added the other youngster sullenly, furious, after all his dreams, to find himself on toy duty with a pack of women.

"Fighting begun, my man?" asked one of the staff officers.

"Yes, sir, out at Santa Mesa," replied the first speaker, a mere boy, his breath coming in a dry-throated rattle, a look in his young eyes that would have made his mother proud of him. It was as if all the promise of his youthful manhood was at that moment gathered in his trembling hand, to fling gladly, a free gift, at the foot of a thing called sentiment, a flag, country—what you will.

The women whispered and giggled and argued and pouted and protested. The guard ground their teeth.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" the colonel smiled non-committally upon them.

"Obey—easiest thing to do," exclaimed Mrs. Parksberry, and away she sailed to her room, where for several hours she had had a valise packed for emergencies—beseeching her compatriots to do the same, but without avail.

"I shall not budge—not one inch. The idea! Captain Felter cabled me it was safe in Manila—here I am, and here I stay!" growled the mother of Lucille, adding: "No clothes in this climate! I'd much rather stay and be murdered in a fresh shirt-waist than live forever in muddled-up dinner clothes."

"I don't know what to do," said Mrs. Dysork; used to masculine mandates,

her eyes turned appealingly to the colonel. He told her what to do, and she contentedly trotted off to her room.

In the end, when Mrs. Felter saw all the others tramping off after the guard down the stairway, she got into a panic, locked her door and her daughter's, and, seizing Lucille's hand, dragged her down the stairs after them, little Gormly trotting down the last of all; so, just as they were, in dinner-gowns, most of them hatless and bagless, the American women started for an indefinite stay on the army transport, the sense that it was all a fantastic dream strong upon them.

Carronatos were waiting below, provided by a military authority eager to be rid of at least this one responsibility among so many. All the officers had disappeared except the colonel and little Gormly, who rode with the women, one in each carriage, in the hand of each a pistol, although the conversation continued to be of the frothiest character.

Just as they left the hotel Mrs. Parksberry saw a native slip out of the hotel door, before it was quickly closed after them, and although the broad straw hat was pulled low, she recognized Juan, the Filipino, as he darted out into the sheltering darkness.

It was midnight when the launch full of exiles left the wharf, some sleepy and inexpressibly bored, some gay with excitement, some very irritable—among them Mrs. Felter, whose last straw of patience was broken because Lucille and the midshipman persisted in finding it excruciatingly funny that the girl's sole piece of luggage consisted of a pink fan!

III.

It was between one and two in the morning before most of the American women in Manila had been successfully netted by an anti-social military authority and deposited on the transport, out of harm's way. A few, a little more slippery than the rest, escaped through the meshes.

As each little party of bewildered women came up over the side of the

steamer, the captain, standing at the head of the gangway, being American, felt obliged not only to say something, but to be facetious, and to each he cried out gaily, in greeting:

"I don't know which of us is nearer being transported by this happy event, ladies, you or I!"

Most of the transported ones wandered about the deck, unable to sleep all the rest of that night, watching the fires that flared up quickly and died out as quickly, all over the city, which lay along the sky-line spread out before them. They listened to the dry rattle of musketry, plainly audible from their anchorage. Later on came the more tragic booming of the big guns from one of the gunboats, the shot following prearranged flare signals.

Out toward Santa Ana, at the head of a band of insurgents, was a man with a strong, brutal face, badly disfigured by smallpox, and he wore the grayish-blue cotton uniform of a Filipino lieutenant of infantry; his duties as head-waiter and spy at the Hotel Oriente ended forever.

The morning came, and with it a temporary cessation of hostilities along the firing-line, but the beginning of hostilities on the American transport!

After Mrs. Parksberry had arrayed herself in a fresh blue cotton gown, she was actually afraid to venture forth among her baggageless compatriots! She had just enough egotism to love to be loved, not enough to love to be hated.

Sustained by the thought that she had done her best to warn them the day before, she opened her stateroom door on the upper deck, and ran plump into Mrs. Felter, still dressed as she had dined at the hotel the evening before.

Her face was congested with wrath and the heat, her deep voice was three notes deeper than usual, and she at once proceeded to take the situation out on poor Mrs. Parksberry, whose only offense was an early bath and a spick-and-span frock that was very becoming to her.

Mrs. Parksberry made all haste to smile and look apologetic. Ignoring

completely the unseemly toilet of Mrs. Felter, she cried:

"Well, the war has come at last! We've a real rebellion on our hands, I'm sorry to say."

"I don't know what you've got on your hands, I've got a daughter in hysterics on mine, with only a gauze evening dress to put on for breakfast, and not so much as a tooth-brush between us!" thundered Mrs. Felter.

Mrs. Parksberry's sense of the ridiculous had given her many a painful moment, but this was the crucial test of her self-control. Nothing but the thought that there was something historic, after all, in the situation, made it possible for her to say:

"Poor little Lucille! I wonder if I can't lend her something? Perhaps a fichu of some sort might——"

"'Fichu'!" sneered Mrs. Felter, with an entirely mirthless contortion of her purple face. "It's lots more serious than that, as you'll find out if you care to hear her. 'Fichu'!" she snorted, and passed on down the deck, hopelessly comical at that hour in her long, much-beffounced black *point d'esprit* gown, through which her very plump shoulders and arms exposed, in the garish light of day, all their deepest creases.

Mrs. Parksberry found a white ball of grief huddled on the floor in the Felter stateroom, the golden head buried in the lower bunk, and it responded with a moan to the name of Lucille.

"Poor little girl, for once in her life literally with 'nothing to wear'! But cheer up, I brought my sewing-bag, and we'll get curtains or—or something from the purser, and we'll fashion something out of nothing—you'll see!"

"Oh, it's not that, Mrs. P—Parksberry," sobbed Lucille. "I don't c-care if I haven't so much as a f-fig-leaf to put on! It's worse than that. It's my pets—my Peterkin and Cato! I f-for-got all about them till five o'clock this morning, and then I remembered that mama saw Cato in my room when she locked our doors last night, when the

guard came and whisked us all off. And, oh, Mrs. Parksberry, they're locked in there together! A c-cat and a magpie!" Feminine grief filled the tiny room once more and leaked out through the lattice door to the sun-scorched deck.

"Where was Peterkin's cage?" demanded Mrs. Parksberry.

Lucille raised her head, scenting sympathy at last.

"Hanging by the open window—I mean, the shutters were open; the window, of course."

"Then Cato can come and go and will be all right, for if your room has even one-half as many mice in it as mine has, to say nothing of other species of fauna, Mr. Cato will fare lots better than we did at that hotel. So half of our trouble is gone already."

"Cato will be only *too* all right—poor helpless little Peterkin! How could I have forgotten him? But the guards were in *such* a hurry, and so unsympathetic, weren't they, Mrs. Parksberry?"

Mrs. Parksberry hurried away from this undoubtedly somber side of the quandary, and dwelt with cheerfulness upon the inaccessibility of the cage, the superabundant supply within its confines, and the well-known longevity of the magpie family.

Before long Lucille Felter had crawled to her feet and begun to show at least a feeble and reluctant interest in fig-leaves. A few minutes later she was excitedly brushing out her golden cape of hair.

"Mama says I ought to be ashamed of myself having conniptions over a magpie, when perhaps hundreds of our poor soldiers were killed last night. She said my children would have to learn all this, date and everything, at school. I never thought of that, but, really, it somehow doesn't help Peterkin, does it? Mama was awfully eloquent; but, Mrs. Parksberry, I just can't get up any excitement about people I've never met! Mama says I lack soul. Of course I'm sorry about it, and dreadfully ashamed, but when I read about floods and earthquakes and

things, no matter if millions and millions of lives are lost, I don't really feel it, do you? I explained all this to mama, but she was perfectly disgusted with me, and got up and dressed and left me to myself. You see, Mrs. Parksberry, I'm not clever, like mama; I never——"

"Lucille! I've got an idea," interrupted Mrs. Parksberry. "Mr. Gormly's ship is lying right by us off our starboard bow—I *think* that's the name of it, but ships wiggle around so I never feel sure. Well, after breakfast, why can't we get our captain to signal over for your midshipman and tell him about the magpie? And then I know he'll go himself, or send some one ashore, and the British navy will rescue Peterkin!"

Lucille fell headlong into her friend's arms, and together they rejoiced. In another ten minutes Lucille, in a blue crape kimono of Mrs. Parksberry's, oceans too big for her, went down to breakfast in the saloon. That the passenger-list was exclusively feminine was felt for once to have its compensations.

Later the captain tried patiently to make the two women understand that it might be considered a breach of maritime etiquette for a mere merchantman to wave frantically to a British man-of-war anchored near by; fortunately for his popularity, he declared that his code-book did not contain the word magpie. It was one of many of his trials among that party of mutinous exiles foisted so suddenly upon him in the middle of the night.

Mrs. Parksberry and Lucille consulted together with gloomy faces. The latter was just planning to wheedle the purser into letting her have the code of signals and a red checker-board tablecloth—still bent upon surreptitiously communicating with little Gormly after a fashion of her own—when Mrs. Dy-sork cried:

"There's a boat from the *Osprey* heading straight for us! Perhaps they're coming to take us ashore!"

"I suppose it's that young jackanapes to see Lucille—and look at her!"

said Mrs. Felter in an aside to Mrs. Parksberry, who exchanged quick glances with the girl, now dimpling and flushed with excitement.

All the women but one—and she had too much rank to come out of her stateroom and be human—came flying to the head of the gangway, and hung along the rail watching the British tars pulling toward them in the *Osprey's* cutter.

Not until it reached the transport's side could they be sure about the officer who sat in the stern. Then he looked up and, quickly distinguishing the golden head in the frieze above him, smiled as only little George Gormly could smile, and Lucille rearranged her long scarf of white gauze, the only wrap that she rescued, so that it further obliterated the inappropriateness, but not the prettiness, of her costume.

The captain of the transport, feeling but trying not to show a certain social elation, met the British midshipman at the gangway and received the note inviting all the American ladies in exile to come over to church at eleven o'clock on the deck of the *Osprey*. Little Gormly took breath to urge the acceptance of his captain's invitation, when a feminine voice swept aside all these international amenities, and demanded:

"Oh, Mr. Gormly, how long can a magpie live without food or water? And can a cat crawl head-down along a big square beam across a ceiling?" Mrs. Felter groaned and fled down the deck. A roar of laughter, in which little Gormly unwisely joined, drowned all the remainder of Lucille's inquiries.

"It's a deuced bad combination, you know, to leave alone together, now, isn't it?" began Gormly cheerfully; then, going a step nearer, he saw that her eyes were full of tears.

His duties did not allow him to leave the gangway, so Mrs. Parksberry dragged Lucille a few steps nearer, and together they poured the sad story of Cato and Peterkin into the middy's already scarlet ears. He had the discretion to take the magpie's fate seriously, and offer his aid to the limit of his life;

for which Lucille did not hesitate to reward him, and at the same time suggest even greater rewards, by pressing his hand with gentle ardor before they parted.

"You'll come off to church?" he murmured rapturously.

"I can't go to church in a kimono or an evening dress, and that's every stitch——"

"She'll be there," came dryly from Mrs. Parksberry.

And when the cutter returned for them at quarter before eleven o'clock, she was indeed there, a credit to Mrs. Parksberry's handicraft. Lucille wore her only gown of white gauze and lace, into which had been introduced a yoke suggestive of dainty handkerchiefs; she had on long white silk gloves, much too large for her, which covered her bare arms; the aforesaid scarf was thrown with apparent carelessness around her shoulders, and on her head she had achieved a hat! Mrs. Parksberry had declared that to go to church, under the British flag, was impossible without one. The result was perched coquettishly on Lucille's little golden head—a mysterious confection of black velvet ripped from the back of Mrs. Felter's only gown, and two huge white roses ravished from Mrs. Parksberry's only hat, all cleverly pinned to a tiny fruit-basket borrowed from the sideboard in the dining-saloon.

"The men will never see through our tricks, and who cares if the women do?" reassured Mrs. Parksberry, as the two sallied forth to conquer the British navy. Mrs. Felter still sulked in regions below, refusing all loans, advice, or sympathy.

Eight American women went over the side of the *Osprey* to church. With national ingenuity they had consummated the required propriety of costume, and filed demurely up the gangway carrying conspicuously the little black prayer-books the purser of the transport had unearthed for the credit of the United States.

The captain of the *Osprey* had only time to express sympathy for the necessity of their exile, when the chaplain in

his flowing white robes came up the ladder and stepped on deck, and the ladies were hurried to their places.

Awnings were stretched overhead, beneath which sat the crew, a solid mass of British beef and brawn, every man immaculately clean and unbelievably solemn. An indissoluble relation between church and state surely has at least the advantage of picturesqueness upon which to fall back in these days of scoffing!

The officers of the ship sat facing the crew, their American guests in front of them. They were on the equator, at the ends of the world, exiled to a transport that the American army might freely give its mind to greater matters; they were on a foreign man-of-war, a few women alone among strangers, and yet it was home when the tall chaplain arose and began:

"The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Lucille gave a little sob, and Mrs. Parksberry touched her hand to quiet her.

Later on their hands came together again when the chaplain intoned:

"From battle and murder and from sudden death——"

"Good Lord deliver us," murmured the men in their rumbling bass. And while they spoke the booming of the great guns of the *Monadnock* rolled out over the quiet waters.

Then the man at the little melodeon began to play, and they all arose and sang together, the American women with the Englishmen. But, sing as they would, it was not loud enough to drown the voice of war coming to them from the shore that Sunday morning.

The night is dark and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.

They all knew the words, they all knew the air; it was indeed—home.

Little Gormly, by heroic efforts and inconceivable circumventions, had managed to sit where he could watch the beloved one, and when he detected Lucille's tiny hand, disfigured by the huge glove, steal up and wipe away a tear

from a pair of wonderful violet eyes, a great affection for the whole population of the United States of America swept over him.

After the benediction the captain rejoined the ladies, and presented the chaplain, and sundry of his other officers not already acquainted with them.

Lucille and Gormly were whispering together eagerly. She was evidently pleading for something, and he lifted up his voice and lied royally: "The doctor's books say that, next to elephants, the Australian magpie is the longest-lived thing known."

Thus spake George Gormly of the British navy, and the American girl beamed upon him. The captain, seeing the smile, asked her name of his old friend, Mrs. Parksberry, whom he had met on former cruises in many sea-ports.

Following the direction of the old sailor's admiring eyes, she too looked at Lucille, and admitted in her heart that even under a little fruit-basket the "golden-haired lassie," as the captain called her, was a dream.

He made no comment after learning that she was the daughter of an army man. Then he said abruptly:

"I fancy the mother knows who he is, and isn't averse to his attentions."

Mrs. Parksberry's heart gave a thump of national displeasure; rather coldly she replied:

"On the contrary, Mrs. Felter has done everything possible, short of locking Lucille up, to discourage him."

The captain was caught in her trap, and she smiled at his resentful reply which contained the desired information:

"Oh! Really, now! Well, there are not many mothers in England of which that could be said! Little Gormly was put under my wing, you know, by a very solicitous old lady with a pedigree that would reach from here to the—er—Luneta. Ha!" He evidently found the situation intensely funny, and Mrs. Parksberry's national pride was in arms.

"We hadn't the faintest idea who the

boy was, any of us. One certainly couldn't tell by his looks, although mentally he does bear certain aristocratic hall marks," she replied quite haughtily. The captain turned and looked at her, and, after one glance at her glaring blue eyes, he suddenly began to laugh, and she laughed, too, and then he told her the whole story.

Presently the Americans gathered about the captain to take their leave, and he begged them to come over the next evening to a little dance, to relieve the monotony of their exile. He would send boats for them at eight o'clock. With one voice they accepted the invitation.

"You see, we haven't any other engagements just now," chirped Lucille, and the captain smiled at her naiveté, and walked with her to the head of the gangway, and little Gormly stood apart and wondered what the captain would write home to the mater in the next mail.

On the way back to the transport Mrs. Parksberry decided not to tell Mrs. Felter the captain's news about the little midshipman, lest Mrs. Felter complacent should prove even more objectionable than Mrs. Felter combatant. As for Lucille, as she was probably only flirting with him, it did not matter, and then, after all, it was his ammunition, not hers. She would say nothing.

IV.

"Can we go ashore to-day?" cried the exiles next morning to the quarantine doctor, who dropped in with the news on his way down to the fleet in his own launch. Being a patient man, he answered gently:

"The men ashore are pretty busy, ladies, just now; they——"

"Forgotten all about us, I dare say!" suggested Mrs. Dysork tearfully.

"Why can't they send a guard with us and let us get a few things from the hotel? I'm sure that would not interfere with their old war," said the only globe-trotter caught by chance at the hotel.

"Through tatter'd clothes small vices

do appear," murmured Mrs. Parksberry rashly.

"The fighting must have been pretty severe out in front," ventured the doctor; "the wounded are coming in in great numbers."

"And we stand here prating of our little affairs!" broke out Mrs. Parksberry, with less than her usual quota of wisdom.

"Perhaps if some of the rest of us had a few little affairs in a bag to prate about, we, too, might be philosophical!" growled Mrs. Felter, and Mrs. Parksberry blushed guiltily, conscious that nothing but time would wipe out the offense of that well-packed valise of hers.

"But, doctor, don't you think they'd let me ashore with you," coaxed Lucille softly, "just for ten minutes, to go to the hotel and feed Peterkin? Don't you suppose——"

"If you go ashore, so shall I!" whimpered Mrs. Dysork. The mutiny spread and the doctor raised his hands and his cap and sought the captain, wisely hiding in his den.

Adult human nature is strangely little affected by environment, and each of those exiled women during the long hot day was neither more nor less than thoroughly herself.

The Person of Exalted Rank suffered tortures from the heat, but preserved her exclusiveness intact. The army women kept closely together on the saloon deck, the navy women were equally clannish on the hurricane deck; the correspondents and nurses had to decide which camp they would join, and abide by the decision to the bitter end.

Mrs. Felter, sunk in drowsy gloom, sought the bow, dragging a chair after her in a hopeless hunt for a breeze; Mrs. Dysork wept herself to sleep on the army deck, well back in the stern.

Mrs. Parksberry and one of the nurses paced slowly up and down the hurricane deck with grave eyes out on the horizon back of the city. Was it the matter of a few weeks, or but the beginning of perhaps years of ceaseless fighting, before the liquid obstinacy of the Malay would yield to the rock-

like obstinacy of the Anglo-Saxon? Strangely excited by the event, and curiously stimulated by the great heat, the two women felt that sleep was impossible, even after such a night, while American history was being made under their very noses.

After awhile Lucille teetered up the ladder, and the sad-eyed nurse went away.

"Do you suppose, Mrs. Parksberry," began Lucille as soon as her head appeared on the level of the deck, "that any real friendship could exist between two animals closely thrown together for several months, even if they don't speak the same language?"

"There are hundreds of recorded cases, my dear," replied that circum-spect woman, which so comforted the heart of Miss Felter that she was soon prattling of the dance to be given on the *Osprey*, the adorableness of the captain for thinking of it, and the singular felicity of owning, ready to put on, a white gauze evening dress.

The two women were lying in steam-er-chairs, facing the British man-of-war, whose flag Lucille eyed as it now and then gave a languid flap on the low flagstaff.

"Mama perfectly loathes him," the girl commented sadly; and Mrs. Parksberry understood. One source of her popularity was the fact that there were no indefinite pronouns in her vocabulary.

"What I like about Mr. Gormly is that he is the only man I ever knew who isn't deadly ashamed of—well, of liking me—I mean, before people, Mrs. Parksberry."

Katharine Parksberry sat bolt up in her chair and at once became excited.

"Lucille, you are on the brink of a great national differentiation of character!"

"Good gracious!" cried the girl, staring; she had heard of Mrs. Parksberry's conversational hobbies, and wondered if one was about to be trotted out.

"The American man," began Mrs. Parksberry, and Lucille knew the hobby was coming, "is probably the best hus-

band in the world, and unquestionably the worst lover! Our men are still very like backwoodsmen in matters of the salon. They sit stiffly, with their hats handy on the floor close beside them, and, no matter how much they adore us, they don't talk love, they talk—lumber! And let another person enter, and they don't even talk that! They look insultingly bored, and rise and offer two limp fingers and hurry away with a perfectly outrageous air of relief—all to 'save their faces,' as the Chinese say. They have no business to save their faces at the expense of ours! And I never can make Tom Parksberry see it. Now, an Englishman—"

"Yes?" encouraged the girl sweetly.

"An Englishman has the full courage of his love. They're not half so shy as they look, let me tell you."

"Yes, I know."

"He doesn't care a brass farthing who sees him, who hears him, who laughs or sneers; he holds the flag of love aloft and is proud of it, and defies the world—or, better yet, doesn't even remember it. Talk of self-consciousness! The most self-conscious unhappy creature on earth is an American man on his wedding-day. My husband looked like an escaped forger—oh, he'll never hear the last of it, I can assure you, while life remains!"

"I wish you'd tell mama that you like Mr. Gormly," sighed Lucille absent-mindedly.

"I never said I liked him. I was talking generally, Lucille; now, don't go and get ideas in your head," scolded Mrs. Parksberry, brought down from the heights rather suddenly. "However, I must say I think you and little George Gormly are singularly suited to each other mentally."

"Lucille," thundered a voice behind them, "go to your room and rest. If you don't, you shall not go to that silly affair to-night, to which I am going, let me tell you. I'll do my own chaperoning hereafter." Mrs. Parksberry turned her guilty eyes away from Mrs. Felter's accusing ones, and Lucille slipped quickly down the ladder.

Not until Mrs. Felter became downright abusive in the scene which followed did Mrs. Parksberry let fly the shot that not only silenced her, but left her a smiling advocate of a possible future alliance between her daughter and the house of Gormly.

At quarter to nine o'clock that night most of the exiles slipped carefully down the long gangway of the American transport, and up the shorter gangway of the British cruiser.

Between the dances, which were of a rollicking order, in deference to a supposed American predilection, little Gormly—who seemed to have accorded him exceptional privileges—found time to corner Mrs. Parksberry and whisper excitedly:

"I told her a taradiddle! I'm in an awful hole about the whole thing. You see, she asked me if I'd gone to the hotel about her pets, and I got out of it by telling a barefaced fib, you know. For I did go, and the landlord and I found the cat fast enough, but when we opened the door he rubbed against my legs but never even tried to leave the room!"

"Poor Peterkin!" murmured Mrs. Parksberry.

"I'd much rather die than tell her, you know," said little Gormly, adding suddenly: "Oh, by the way, we couldn't find a trace of the magpie."

The music had begun again, a certain weird cake-walk popularly supposed to be the American national dance, upon which the ship's band had been hard at work all day, and, rather than hurt their feelings, Mrs. Parksberry led off with the first lieutenant, and all the others laughed and followed her lead.

At the end of a short program the British national hymn was played, followed by the then unselected Star-Spangled Banner. The English stood listening with grave reverence to the former; the Americans listened to the latter with self-conscious restlessness and a strong tendency to giggle; and again Mrs. Parksberry pondered on that social courage that time alone can develop in a young nation.

Then, after the good nights were exchanged, the women were rowed back by the English sailors over the breathless water to the transport.

Manila rested in quiet that night; only, far away out on the firing-line some nipa huts were burning, and on the bay long, restless fingers of light from the American flag-ship searched out the secrets of the darkness veiling the face of the waters.

Another day and another night, and yet another, and then one morning the quarantine doctor looked up at the row of faces peering down at him over the rail, and began to laugh.

"That means we're released!" cried Mrs. Parksberry, and after one corroborative nod from the doctor, away they went pell-mell down the hot decks to their staterooms.

There was a great scurrying about, much laughter, recent personal and military animosities faded away; even the Person of Rank deigned to come out of her cabin and breathe the sweet morning air, the expression of her pale, peevish face successfully keeping at bay all intrusion.

Just before leaving their prison Mrs. Parksberry caught Lucille wigwagging wildly and unofficially over to the *Osprey* with a striped bath-towel, greatly to the mystification of the officer of the deck, who could make nothing of it, even through the glasses.

There was the usual scramble at the wharf, in front of the captain of the port's office, for vehicles to carry them to their destinations.

"Shall I order a carabao team for your heavy baggage?" laughed the captain, himself coming out to greet them. Mrs. Felter gave him one slow look, and he tried to remember what Captain Felter looked like. A number of officers came across the quay and cheered the return of the transported ones.

The Felters and Mrs. Parksberry squeezed into a rickety old *calesa*, which reeled and rocked along through the now quiet streets, and by a miracle they finally reached the hotel.

Mrs. Felter, impervious to either in-

terest or sympathy with anything in the animal kingdom except her own outraged self, swept on to her room, banged the door, and conspicuously locked it.

Mrs. Parksberry put down her be-loved valise, and took from Lucille's trembling hand her key and unlocked the fatal room for her.

Cato, fat, sleek, and serene, was busy with his toilet in the sun on the window-sill.

Lucille gasped out, clinging close to Mrs. Parksberry:

"Oh, please look! Is Peterkin there? I'm afraid to look."

"N-no, dear; but probably——" began Mrs. Parksberry, with reluctance, but there was a sudden crash and scamper as Lucille flew at Cato. Seizing an umbrella and overturning in her flight a chair, she reached the window-sill, to find the cat gone, with one leap over her shoulder, back into the room. Back and forth he tore until Lucille was breathless, and finally Cato settled once more on the sill, surveying the room roguishly, evidently with an idea that it was some sort of a little human game, and he had won it, with all of his lives still intact.

An empty hook hung where once swung a merry magpie. The two women continued to look in impossible places for the cage. Finally, after a long glance behind the steamer-chair, Mrs. Parksberry hastily arose and went to Lucille and drew a breath heavy with tragedy. The girl buried her face, bracing herself for the worst.

A loud knock on the door sent a shiver through them both.

"Come in, *entrar, entrez,*" cried Mrs. Parksberry, always ready for linguistic emergencies, and thankful for any diversion.

The door opened cautiously, and through the crack came Gormly's anxious voice.

"Oh, come in, Mr. Gormly; perhaps you can suggest something. Cato couldn't have got away with the whole cage, now, could he?" Mrs. Parksberry patted Lucille's back soothingly with one hand, and beckoned the mid-

shipman with the other. The girl was weeping quietly, her face hidden on her friend's shoulder.

Little Gormly hesitated at the door, until he noticed Mrs. Parksberry's frantic gestures with her free arm. If they meant anything at all, they meant him to enter and dive under the steamer-chair, and be quick about it! In an instant he was on his knees beside the chair, and after several wild swoops with his arm brought forth Peterkin's empty cage. The door was open, and to its sides clung numerous tiny gray and white feathers. Following Mrs. Parksberry's wordless instructions, he stole from the room with the cage like a thief in the night.

When he returned, the bereaved one was being led to Mrs. Parksberry's huge, many-screened room. She beckoned him to follow and put her finger on her lips. Breathless and mystified, but happy, little Gormly obeyed and sat down beside Lucille on the cane-bottomed sofa under the window. Mrs. Parksberry left them there together, and was soon lost in the labyrinth of tall bamboo screens which subdivided her single chamber into many.

Lucille's grief slowly abated under little Gormly's sympathetic ministrations, which seemed to be independent of mere words.

A bird filled in the hot silence, singing out in the weather-worn trees of the plaza, and as he listened Gormly had one of the few inspirations of his life.

"My theory is that Cato did spring at the cage, and it fell out of the window. And as it fell, you know, the door opened and the magpie got away, and has gone over to the *insurrectos*—an altogether base, faithless little birdie!"

Lucille was obviously impressed, and turned a look full of gratitude and admiration upon little Gormly. Then she suddenly sprang to her feet and threw back the great green shutters.

"Sh—sh, listen!" she whispered. The bird's strange note sounded again out in the plaza.

"I verily believe that's he now, out

there! He's imitating some bird he has just heard, the way he always did! Your theory is perfectly right!" She was now her old smiling self, the heaviest load lifted from her heart, Peterkin alive and happy, Cato forgiven.

No further sound came from the scorched trees; the noon heat laid its hand of burning brass upon all life, and it swooned beneath it.

Elbow to elbow the two stood listening by the open window; then he turned

and said something to her, and Mrs. Parksberry could not help hearing the girl say gently, a little later:

"Well, all right, but it will have to be an awfully long engagement."

"Leave that to me!" triumphantly ordered the future British admiral.

And a few feet away, on the broad window-sill, Cato continued washing his face with long, graceful strokes and purring in utter contentment with himself and the world.



COMPENSATION

AT a church bazaar I graced a stall—
An earnest, strenuous clothes-pin doll
In the missionary line.
But they turned me out, to my despair,
A dancer, fluffy and painted and bare—
A scarlet Columbine.

With a peanut Pierrot, all in white—
At first, I deemed him arrayed for night—
The fact I blush to tell.
But a peanut doll was not my kind;
Frail were the principles of his mind,
Frail as his outer shell.

Ever he'd whisper, "Ah, why not stray
On the primrose path a little way,
You vestal-virgin stick?"
Stern my voice, "Nong, Pierrot, nong.
You cannot tempt me with dance and song.
I have no wish to be chick."

But, very much to her own dismay,
The salesmaid dropped me one fine day
Into a bin of coal.
Better, I thought, this soot and grime
Than to lead the life of a dancing mime.
Though I never can be whole.

Both arms are gone, of legs but one.
So they dressed me as a cloistered nun,
And now I make no sign
When Pierrot, mocking, from his place,
Cries, "You *were* a thing of airy grace
As a scarlet Columbine."

MRS. WILSON WOODROW.

THE GROWTH OF THE HOUSEHOLD

By ANNE RITTENHOUSE



HE sociologist—who is much like the medical specialist, able to fit his own pet theories and diseases to any one—is shaking a mournful head at what he calls the passing of American home life.

He would have us believe that the household, with all that it means—the family, the hearthside, the fixed abode where we and our children and our children's children abide, and about which the tenderest and most lasting associations of life center—is to fade with the years, and that posterity will class it with the buffalo and the painted Indian.

The President of the United States, whose cult of living revolves around the family life, sounds a warning against race suicide, a vital blow to the home idea, which has gone round the world. And from far-away Canada comes a graver note of warning. Professor Goldwin Smith writes that the American home itself is in deadly peril; that the household which has been the foundation-stone of character is to give way to the vagabondage of the flat; that the roving, restless, ruinous existence of apartment life is replacing the happy placidity of the home.

At the bottom of it all, he says, is the servant question. Wearied with the dearth, the insubordination, the independence, of household help, the wife of to-day lets the white woman's burden roll from her shoulders and rushes in despair to a flat or a hotel, where somebody else arranges and pays for the domestic service.

This independence of the servant, he

thinks, is largely due to the factories. The woman who works for a small wage prefers the loom to the broom, the whirling machine to the pots and pans, the insolence of the boss, who is a man, to the fretting of the mistress, who is a woman. She feels here a sense of independence, and begins to look upon domestic service as a badge of servitude. She complains that her friends do not treat her as an equal if she "hires out."

But is the peril to the home really imminent? Or is it theoretical?

Goldwin Smith is of too serious renown to speak without evidence. Living in retirement in Toronto, he is an onlooker at the struggle of people *en masse*, but in his eighty-two years of life he has passed through stirring phases of civic and social conditions, and speaks as the aged always speak, from a vast experience that seems to have somewhat the sternness and inspiration of prophecy.

Sixty years ago he belonged to a coterie of powerful political and economic writers in England, of whom it was said that to them "nothing was new, nothing was true, nothing was of the highest importance." But Professor Smith believes that the coming disaster to the American household is new, is true, and is of vital importance to our character.

Is he right?

When one goes to the big cities and sees the long cañons of flat and apartment-houses; when one reads that last year nine hundred and twenty-two apartment-houses were built in New York alone between January and September, at a cost of fifty-two million dollars; when one hears the great city

architects say they are engaged for years ahead to plan only these human rookeries, the hearth-loving American is a little frightened, and feels that truly disaster is near.

But is it?

The home idea in its best sense is not a city product. Then why be alarmed if the city seems to have forgotten its existence for a time? The smaller towns and the open country have always held strongly to the household life. There there are no such domestic inventions as flats, and no apartments as New York knows them. And as these represent the great majority of our millions of people, it would seem as though the household were not imperiled to any appreciable degree.

The government experts tell us that there are about seventeen million families in the United States. How many of them do you think actually own their homes—not flats or apartments, but homes? Just half. To be exact, 8,236,765. No trace of peril there, do you think?

Yet that is not all; for 8,246,747 families rent houses—homes of their own for the time being. Add these two numbers together, and you will grant there are not many families left for flats and apartment-houses. Doesn't this prove that the passing of the household is not so imminent as one might be led to believe by the sociologist?

Whatever menace there is comes from the cities—the immense centers, where millions gather, and which students tell us will become larger and more powerful and more numerous at the end of each year of the future. And what of the city? Is the household really in peril even there?

If it ever were, the time is passing, the danger is over. It all hinges on one thing—transportation. The servant question—and far be it from any woman to belittle it—is a comparatively small force in sending families to flats and apartments.

The majority of our people who live in this manner do so from choice, not from necessity.

The area of an American city is

small. The slow transportation of ten years ago forced men to live near their places of business. Time, the most valuable commodity to the man of affairs and to the man who works in day labor, could not be frittered away on poky horse-cars, liable to be overwhelmed and detained by every passing storm of rain or snow.

So the city had to be compact. It could not spread out, so it had to be built up. The railways carried some of those who clung passionately to a bit of green and a stretch of blue sky, even at the sacrifice of time, but they reached a comparatively small area of the country round the great cities.

Then the trolley came, and the beginning of the end of universal flat life was in sight.

It started timidly at first for short distances, then more boldly and more speedily, reaching out farther and farther in its explorations; and now each year sees electricity a rival with steam in that greatest of necessities to the city-dweller—speed.

The world around the huge cities opened up. Every spot became accessible. The time-table was abolished, and the suburbanite's mind was free.

He felt that even if he missed his last train he could walk to the corner and get a trolley at the end of, possibly, five minutes.

Promoters and syndicates did not follow the trolley, but went ahead of it, anticipating its next mile; and here they build houses that rented for small sums, and that were supplied with heat and gas. They beckoned to the young married couples with small incomes, to the parents of large families, where there was little money and a great ambition for open air and outdoor life.

Rent was cheap, vegetables could be grown and chickens raised in the back yard. In little better houses, with little larger yards, lived artists, writers, workers in all the leisurely professions; people who were not compelled to live in the cities, but who were not rich enough or independent enough to be out of daily touch with the places that bought their wares. This element con-

stituted the first exodus from town; and the young married people were the most prominent and dominant of those who led the march out to the end of the trolley line.

But even yet the cry was, "Time, time; I haven't time." So the subway came, putting men from the heart of the city to its farthest edge. This was a twentieth-century piece of engineering, in its effect and result as wonderful and startling as the magic carpet in "The Arabian Nights." Upon this, you remember, a man might sit and wish himself in a certain place, and almost instantly he was there.

One subway will produce more. They will multiply throughout America. The cry of every city is for a subway; something that will go faster than anything else, and that cannot be stopped by the rage of the elements or the obstacles or accidents of busy street life. No coal-carts can block the way. No blizzards can hold up the speed.

In New York the next year or two will see these tubes through which humanity is whirled at breakneck speed passing under the river to Long Island, with its great stretches of glorious country; and to New Jersey, now alluring, but only endurable for placid people because of the troublesome and slow ferries. And as with New York, so with other cities; everything is to be sacrificed to the American cry, "Speed, speed, speed!"

The rich, the multi-millionaires, yielded long ago to the yearning for home life out of the cities. They inaugurated the building of country homes. Everywhere in America one sees the establishment of palatial households that may endure for generations. On Long Island, all over New England, through the hills of Pennsylvania, up the Hudson, along the Pacific Coast, the immensely rich ones of this country have set themselves to the task of building and furnishing wide-spaced, durable homes, in which are model nurseries and servant-rooms, as well as the costliest living and sleeping-rooms. Here are placed the antique furniture and the heirloom silver. Here hang the family

portraits. On these walls are collections of Americana; and here are old libraries handed down through the century, or the beginning of new libraries which are to be handed down.

To these homes the rich come after sojourn in cities or strange lands. True, they do not remain there for ten months of the year, as in olden times, when the mail-coach or a vagrant train was the only means of escape; when roads were deep in mud and unprotected; when one's neighbors were a mile or more away; and when the desire to see, to experience, and to absorb was not so serious a part of the American temperament. People do flit to and fro—that is, wealthy people—at a pace that would have startled their home-building ancestors; but the ancestors would have done the same had the "swing round the circle" been such an easy feat. Conditions, not temperaments, have changed.

The millionaires were the first of the well-to-do classes to awake with a start to the fact that their urban homes were bedded in the highroads of traffic, of trolley, of the noisy trucks and the clamor of the department shops. They did not like the rattle and ugliness of traffic at their bedsides. The odor of bacon from the grocery-store under their drawing-room windows was unsavory; and they did not relish the thousand and one shoppers at the department store across the street staring into the windows and commenting on the price of the lace curtains.

They found that the parks were no longer comfortable places to bring up little children, for there was more than a jest in the story of the flirtation of the policeman and the nurse-maid; and there were too many dissolute vagabonds on the benches to make things safe in these days of bold kidnaping. So they opened up vast spaces of lovely territory for their homes.

It is not a theory of the future, but a condition of the present, that the best residence houses in the great centers are being given over to milliners, dress-makers, house decorators, the masseuse, and the manicure. Those who prophesy

say that every available bit of space in our city will be demanded by commerce. It is to avoid this that the millionaires have fled to the country for their home life.

In New York, for instance, Fifth Avenue will soon mean little as far as fashionable private houses goes. The millionaires are being pushed by colossal shops farther beyond Central Park every season. Each year commercial activity routs out social position, geographically. Mrs. Astor, the *doyenne* of New York society, moved blocks up Fifth Avenue and thought herself secure. She returned from Europe to find one gigantic down-town shop moved up near her front door, and her nephew's property already leased for another and more stupendous store.

Philadelphia is having the same experience as New York. Its ultrafashionable Walnut Street is being leased by shopkeepers; and its Rittenhouse Square district, which is inhabited by the classes with dollars, is slowly being invaded by minor trades.

Chicago is frankly giving up its best streets and residential thoroughfares to those who cater to the full purse. Washington is the only city that is safe; but, then, it does not encourage industrial activity. Its profession, its place in the world, its reason for being, are social, not commercial.

But in every other part of America no urban block has become safe from this epidemic of trade. Therefore, the permanent urban households of the rich may become obsolete from the very sordidness which is necessary to an American city.

The men of the nation may be content to pass their working hours amid grinding noise and a cyclone of dust and soot; the women may yearn for a few weeks of it when social gaiety is at its height, but no people will be content to live, to spend their years, in such dusty turmoil.

Apartment-houses, flats, and hotels supply this temporary yearning for city life, but the desire of the millionaires for a home is finding its truest expression in the country.

Then that enormous class of society which financially and socially is called the great middle class, the bone and blood of our national life, the exponent of what is safest and soundest and healthiest in living, yielded to the beckoning skies and the lure of the lawn.

They have reached the epoch in history when they are able to listen to the heart and not to necessity. This class represents the actual prosperity of America. It is not in the very rich or the very poor that one finds the common measure of a country. It is in the people between.

They do not follow either of the other classes. They are the most independent class of humans on any continent. It is they who promote its regular commerce, fight its wars, populate its schools, and send out its notable statesmen, great financiers, and the representatives of our nation abroad in courts and trade.

These are disciples of the household idea.

Go on any line of rapid transit and you will see thousands upon thousands of their homes; homes in the highest sense; permanent places with the newest improvements, made to enjoy life to its utmost; homes costing from five thousand to fifty thousand dollars. These are the finger-posts to the road up which the nation is traveling toward home life.

These are the people who have incomes of five thousand dollars a year and upward, who are building houses furnished with the newest heating apparatus, electric-light plants, and other evidences of permanent occupancy.

This shows that the epidemic of country home-building is something more than a whim of society, of multi-millionaires. In each place where there is a monster palace, surrounded by seventy-five to one hundred and fifty acres, there are dozens of places less pretentious, with smaller acreage, but having in themselves all the necessities and requirements to round out and make complete the living of a family. They have vegetable gardens, cows, chickens, and all the farm or garden

products in sufficient quantities not only to sustain the family itself, but to bring in a revenue from the sale of the surplus.

There are hundreds of such families who now spend seven, eight, or nine months a year at their country homes instead of dividing them between city and seashore resorts, and thousands more have given up all habitation in the cities except for a flat, which they use for a short time only, during the winter.

Many of these people make no pretensions to fashionable life. They aim to be comfortable, cultured, happy, and bring up their children around a center-table and a family lamp in the same good old way in which our earlier generations of stalwart men and vigorous women were brought up.

These houses are, throughout America, in close touch by telephone and transportation with the great centers. Near them have risen good schools for the young, and near them seminaries and academies, where the children of these homes may be prepared for college—a guarantee of the permanence of the suburban household.

Surely there can be no doubt of the growth of this feeling for the personal home latterly, no matter what may have been the trend when perforce human beings sought shelter like cave-dwellers in piles of clay and stone.

When it became practicable the business man yielded to instinct, the wife to the promptings of the heart.

He has more time to spend at home

than he had fifteen years ago. The eight-hour day of the usual business man gives him more home leisure. He finds he can do more work in those eight hours than his grandfather could in twelve, because of the telephone and rapid transit. He is, therefore, learning to be content with the shorter day, and as a result his home life has grown in importance.

Through the cheapness of the telephone, and the rapidity and wide reach of the suburban delivery of city's stores, the wife also finds life in the open robbed of inconveniences.

And this is not all. It is only the beginning.

Another invention in transportation has come, quite as revolutionary as the trolley and the subway. It brings suburb and city, country palace and opera-house, the homes of the country and the shops of the city, in closer contact than was even dreamed before.

And this great factor in our national life is the speed-making automobile.

To-day the man of affairs may have something faster than railway or trolley at his door, ready to pace the shortest path to his office in the quickest possible time.

Now no spot is "inaccessible," if it be on land, no matter whether trolley or steam-car pass near or not. The motor-car is changing the suburban map. It is leading away from the five-room flat to the comfortable country house; from a temporary abiding-place to a permanent home.



A STRANGER

THE wonder of her merry eyes
Lit up my world and cleared its skies;
And yet, alas, I never knew
Whose were those eyes of laughing blue.

LEE FAIRCHILD.

LADY BETTY'S LAMENT



LADY BETTY, coming down the stairway, gorgeous in a regular dowager's brocade and a stiff, rich ruff of yellow Flanders lace, presented the paper to her husband

with a languid hand.

He stood at the stair's foot awaiting her, a perfectly groomed, handsome young man, pale, grave, precise—in one word, as Lady Betty would have told you with some heat, "Dutch." He opened the paper slightly, and glanced at it. "Am I permitted?" he inquired formally.

Lady Betty drooped her long-fringed lids a trifle lower over her lustrous, insolent eyes, and merely bent her head in assent. Her husband's English, like his dressing, was laboriously correct; yet, like the cut of his steinkirk or the tying of his powdered wig, it revealed subtly, somewhere, his Dutch origin.

As his wife nodded, Van Nostrand, who had glanced at the paper's contents, gave her a look of surprise, drew his heels together with a click, and bowed low. "You honor me," he murmured, and he began a more critical perusal.

This is what he read:

LAMENT.

Oh, I would I had died in my youth, in my youth,

Ere ever my years were three;

Had quitted this weary world, in sooth,

Ere I had been wedded with thee!

Unto thy cold and sullen heart
My heart of glee is wed,
And thy glum mug across the board
Makes bitter all my bread—
I would that I were dead!

Yea, I envy Polly, the scullery-maid,
Who loveth well her John;
For that thing is hateful to my sight
Which thou hast looked upon—
I would I were dead and gone!

Lady Betty regarded him, reading, with a somewhat contemptuous smile. "You desire my criticisms on this?" her husband interrogated as he concluded. "You wish me, I mean, to mention anything I observe which is not—exactly correct?"

Lady Betty bent her head again more languidly. "I find," began her husband, "three misspelled words."

Lady Betty flounced—I am sorry I can use no more dignified word—she flounced down the few remaining steps with scarlet cheeks. "A grave charge, sure, Mr. Van Nostrand," she said acrimoniously.

Her husband continued composedly: "It is very fair for a beginner—I take it this is a first effort?"

There was no reply but a toss of the head, and he went on: "It has more fire than finish, however; and here"—presenting the paper, and touching with an immaculate finger the line indicated—"here in the fourth line—surely 'wedded with thee' is not good English. The versification is fair," he was con-

tinuing; but his wife pounced upon the paper with a little shriek.

"How dare you?" she cried with blazing eyes. "This is too much!"

"Madame!" ejaculated her husband.

"'Tis too much, I say," she went on, "prying and spying on a miserable woman's private papers till not her very thoughts are her own!"

"Spying! Private papers, Lady Betty! Who handed me the verses?"

"I did," retorted Lady Betty, "and you knew well I thought 'twas the weekly accounting—the accounting which you hold a lady should mool over, muddling her brains about the price of junket or the conserves for your table, setting down the very pennies she flings to a beggar, to save you a few filthy farthings!" Lady Betty's full voice broke, but she held out bravely to the end, and said her say.

"What should I conceive the paper to be but the household accounts? A love-gift?" inquired her husband quietly. "You are not wont to hand me *billets-doux*." There was not the faintest trace of bitterness in his speech. He made the statement dryly, as he would have given the tally of that account, yet Lady Betty chose to hold herself reprov'd.

"Whose fault is it?" she retorted angrily, and would have gone further, but—

"My lady, your father and my lord bishop have come. 'Tis your birth-night. We have guests bidden. Shall I lead you down?" interrupted her husband, with his usual grave courtesy.

She took his hand. Poor Betty! There were a thousand childish, foolish things she longed to say; but because his will met and mastered hers, she took his hand and they paced into the great hall, brave with its armor from many a hard-fought field, its lines of bowing servants, the image of a happily wedded young couple.

Dinners in that day were noontide affairs; but the guests sat till dusk over this one. His grace of Leinster had not been able to go down to his country-house, as was his custom at this season, because of the troubled state of

the country. "Gad! London's not much better," he commented, in speaking of it. "With our common people this year, the idea of a simple manner of enjoyment seems to be the looting of shops and dwellings belonging to their fellow-citizens of a different creed."

Lady Betty was paying no attention. Her mind was busily going over the scene with her husband concerning her verses—so busily that she heard neither her father, the jesting of her younger guests, nor a conversation which the bishop was carrying on with her husband, till his reverence remarked: "I should not have fancied you a judge of verse, sir."

Betty's heart stood still for a moment. Were they discussing her wretched rhymes? But no, it was the Latin poem of one of the graduates of the university which was under the scalpel.

"To write doggerel verse at all is offensive," she heard her husband say in his usual quiet, weighty fashion, "but to write halting verse, verse which limps, should, methinks, be a hanging offense."

Lady Betty's mind ran frantically over the stanzas she had just handed her husband. Where had they limped? Which were the halting lines?

So immersed was she in her calculations, counting on the fingers of the hand which she held hidden below the board, that she failed to give the proper signal for the ladies to rise, and was prompted thereto by her husband.

Altogether, the cup of Lady Betty's shame and mortification was full; and that, with Lady Betty, meant rage, not against herself, but against some one whom she conceived to be the author of her misfortunes.

Lady Betty Carstairs, youngest daughter of the Duke of Leinster, had been a toast, a belle and a beauty since she was out of school.

Three years before, with the accession of William and Mary, the duke, a Catholic peer and formerly a very warm adherent of King James, found his position at court—or, for that matter, elsewhere—an extremely trying one.

He was a man of great elegance, as well as of marked personal beauty, and he had been used to the favor of James and his gay court. William of Orange he failed to please, and for the Dutchmen who came in William's train he conceived the heartiest distaste, and naturally excited in them a similar feeling.

Matters were really unpleasant for the House of Leinster when young Mr. Van Nostrand, a Dutchman, a plain mister, but of enormous wealth and fine family, and a favorite of King William, proposed for the hand of Lady Betty; and it is not to be denied that his grace represented to his daughter in very glowing colors the advantage to himself and the whole relationship which would accrue from this match.

The young beauty had met Mr. Van Nostrand at a rout or two, and fancied that she had made a great impression on him. His proposal appeared to bear this out, and Lady Betty, primarily a daughter of her house, accepted him, partly that her father might be pleased, and partly that she had been—for a duke's daughter—shabby and threadbare all her days, and here was a prospect of what looked to her unlimited wealth; but more, perhaps, for another reason which she did not whisper even to her mirror or acknowledge to herself.

That her vanity had been mortified in the match was not to be denied. The jewels her husband gave her were superb; the house he took in Soho, the new fashionable quarter of London, a suitable mansion; but, having experienced in the first few days of their wedded life a touch of his bride's temper, and having apparently realized therefrom, without further telling, her entire attitude of mind toward himself, young Van Nostrand took refuge in a formal and ornate courtesy of manner with his wife, which he might have used with equal appropriateness toward his grandmother.

This strained condition of affairs inspired Lady Betty's verses. She worked at them in the intervals when she was pouting over her accounts, sulking that

she should spend her birthday with one whom she chose to regard as so gloomy a companion—of whom, if she were honest with herself, she had made so gloomy a companion—and miss all the gaiety and romping that marked the day in her own home. She looked about upon her guests, the women, when she had them herded into the drawing-room, her ears strained for any sound from the dining-hall, and she longed to box their ears and shout: "Go home! I want none of you! I am listening only for the sound of a deliberate foot in the passage from the dining-hall."

And finally she headed a party of young hoidens like herself, and carried their retreat by storm. The dinner was a family affair; no need for her husband to look so shocked, she thought, at this informality. How was she to know that her elderly cousin of Bromleigh was in the midst of a story unfit for ears feminine, even in the time of William and Mary, and that the young Dutchman's respect for gray hairs, and his reverence for female purity, had a battle before he could undertake the somewhat difficult task of heading the old gentleman off. In short, a dinner-table of the day, after the ladies were gone and serious drinking was well begun, was not a good spot for them to return to, and Van Nostrand's face showed that he thought so.

That she had presented her "Lament" to her husband with apparent malice was only a result of Betty's usual carelessness. Now, the tiresome guests all gone, she stood in her own room, gazing at the folded household account which she should have handed him, and wondered whether he would come to ask for it. As she lifted it in her fingers there was a tap upon the door behind her and Van Nostrand came in.

"Here is your account," she said hurriedly; and then noticed that he carried a small coffer, evidently a jewel-casket.

And "Here are your verses," he returned, with equal formality, withdrawing them from an inner pocket and handing them to her.

"I don't want them. You may keep

them," she retorted, with cheeks like peonies.

"As a birthday-gift, on your first birthday with me—as a love-token?" inquired Van Nostrand, with his first approach to bitterness. And Betty remembered that Dutch custom would have had her give as well as receive on this anniversary.

"Oh, love!" she flung out. "If you come to talk about love, you——" and her small hands drummed on the window-pane as she stared hard into the night through angry tears.

"Who is more fitted to talk about love, madame, than a bridegroom of three weeks?" inquired Van Nostrand, setting down his coffer on the dressing-table and looking at her with some sternness. "Here are some diamonds. I sent to The Hague for them for your birthday-gift, and they arrived late. Perhaps you will like them, even though they do come out of the Netherlands."

"You are as cold-blooded as——" her voice broke, and she was silent, to avoid sobbing outright.

"I? Cold?" returned her husband. "You mistake me."

"Oh, I know you well enough," said Lady Betty bitterly. "I was deceived, cruelly deceived, when I married you, but I know you now for what you are."

There was a long silence, which Van Nostrand broke. "For what I am?" he inquired. "Pray, madame, out of your kindness, inform me what am I, and, most of all, how have I deceived you?"

Lady Betty openly sulked. It was a petty and childish conclusion, after so tragic a beginning; but for the life of her she could not find words to answer these two direct inquiries.

"What, madame, and how?" persisted Van Nostrand.

"When I married you I thought——" began Lady Betty, and then halted lamely.

"You thought?" prompted her husband.

There was a long silence. "I thought you were taller—and—that your eyes were black!" she flung herself into a chair, weeping stormily.

"That I was taller, and that my eyes were black!" repeated her husband, in amazement. "Had you not eyes yourself, my lady?"

"Oh, I have been deceived! I have been cruelly deceived! There was never woman so shamefully deceived as I!" sobbed Lady Betty, for answer.

Her husband contemplated her long and quietly. "I think, my lady," he said finally, "that you desire a separation from the man you have thoughtlessly married, and that you offer these two objections, which I can in no manner remove—since none may add an inch to his stature, nor change the color of his eyes—by way of making certain this separation."

At the word "separation" Lady Betty sprang up. Her tears dried on her burning cheeks. "Oh, I do! I do!" she cried, with what would have been, to any one less interested than Van Nostrand, suspicious vehemence. "I do long to be rid of you. I long to be in my father's house again."

She turned feverishly to her wardrobe and began searching with tremulous hands for a hood and mantle. "I will go now," she panted. "You shall not say I stayed one instant after you—after you——"

Van Nostrand placed himself before her and caught her little hot fingers in his strong, cool clasp. "Listen to reason, madame," he said. "You cannot go abroad to-night. Did you not hear the talk at our table? The streets are full of rioters. It is not safe for a Catholic, and your father's daughter, to be abroad in them."

For answer, Lady Betty drew in one sharp breath and looked furiously at the calm, pale face which was nearly on a level with her own—she had been deceived in Van Nostrand's height. Then, wrenching a hand free, she struck him lightly but contemptuously across the cheek. "I had not thought you were a coward, too," she raved. "That is one of the things I had yet to learn of you. I am not afraid, and I am going."

Van Nostrand changed color at the blow; and if she had taken the trouble to look at his eyes there would have

been no question of their being black just then. "I will not say, Lady Betty, that you are my wife," he returned—"that might be offensive to you. You are, however, a member of my household, and you do not go into the streets to-night. Not, if I lock you in your room to hold you here."

"Ah, you *are* a coward!" she cried, as she tried to push past him toward the door. Then, with a sudden change of front, she laid the mantle off. "You need not lock me in," she added, with such shreds of dignity as she could gather about her. "I shall go in the morning."

He bowed and passed out; she heard no sound of the key turning, yet when she slipped quietly to the door, a moment after, she could see that the bolt was shot.

She went back to her dressing-table, and looked at her reflection in the glass. The sight of the jewel-casket made her flinch; and it was prime evidence of the tremendous pressure upon her emotions, that she felt no desire to open it. She remembered that Van Nostrand had an uncle who was a diamond merchant at The Hague. "Tradesman!" she muttered between her teeth, and looked again at the girl in the glass.

But when you have just struck a man in the face, and your heart is still aching to think of the look with which he received your blow, there is really no deep satisfaction in bullying his gifts. One thought superseded every other. Van Nostrand had suggested a separation, He had suggested it, not she. Suddenly, out of the chaos in her mind, a plan evolved itself. She struck the bell that stood upon a little table in her outer room. The door was promptly opened and her footman appeared. "Send up Joan," she directed, over her shoulder, without looking at the man.

When the woman came up, "Are you and your sister going home to-night?" she asked.

"The gates be all locked, your ladyship, and there be orders that all stays indoors. 'Tis ever the way now—and on her birthnight!" she muttered under her breath, and stood looking with

veiled impatience at her mistress, anxious to be back to the revel in the servants' hall.

"My birthnight," Lady Betty echoed in the same whisper, and added in so low a tone that it was a mere breath: "I shall keep my birthday in my father's house."

The abigail started and looked at her. The locked doors had conveyed some impression to Joan's mind, and she was getting fresh light on it. "The cook's scullion, your ladyship, his mother be's very ill, and he be a-going out—was you wishful to send a message?"

"No, to go with him." And then, as the girl threw up her hands with a cry of "Your father's daughter, my lady—alone in the streets this night!" she added sharply: "Go and tell the boy to wait. Tell him that you are going with him. I will cover my face—nobody need know the difference."

Joan grinned broadly. "Yes, your ladyship," she said, courtesying and disappearing.

When she came back again she found Lady Betty awaiting her in mantle and hood. "Go into the bedroom and lie down on the bed; draw the curtains," commanded Lady Betty imperiously, "and if anybody comes in or asks anything of you, say 'Let me alone,' and say it exactly as I say it."

"Yes, your ladyship," answered Joan, as though these were her daily duties.

Once in the street, Lady Betty was in absolute panic. The lad who accompanied her was timid, and at best went but a short distance. When she was alone, she started and crouched at every sound, and then ran on the faster. What a mad thing it was for her to do! Should she ever find a chair? At the south end of King's Square she found a chair, and the two chairmen lying beside it, either asleep or drunk. The streets were strangely silent and deserted, a consequence of the rioting earlier in the day.

"I want you to take me to the bishop's palace in Hogsden Gardens—the Bishop of Chester," she ordered, stirring one of the bearers with her foot.

"Lord A'mighty!" cried the man, sit-

ting up and rubbing his eyes. "Here's a Papist wench wanting to go right to t'owd bishop's house!"

"Let us have a look at her," cried the other man, staggering to his feet and pulling rudely at her hood.

Lady Betty drew back with a smothered scream. Then she turned to flee, but the men were quicker than she.

"Now, mistress," remonstrated one of them, placing himself in front of her, "'tis only ugly wenches what don't like to be looked at;" and he reached again for the hood.

Lady Betty had no weapon. She drew back and back toward the chair, until she crouched against it. The man whom she had first addressed was holding a flaming link, and the other still reached for the edge of her hood to push it aside. As she brought up with a little shock against the chair, the man stumbled forward and his wrist crossed her mouth.

There is in all of us, I suppose, when we are desperate, at bay and weaponless, some trace of the wild beast, which knows well how to use nature's weapons. Lady Betty's lips opened and her strong white teeth met through the flesh of the wretch's wrist. Then, the instant it was done, she was ready to faint.

He sprang back with a yell of pain. "The little Papist devil!" he roared, with a string of oaths. "'Ware! She's got a knife," as the other man sprang to ward her.

A thousand things rushed with wonderful clearness through Betty's mind as she crouched by the chair and watched the two men consulting over the bloody wrist of one of them. She believed no less than that she was about to die, and then her husband would never know that it was wounded pride—yea, and wounded love, as well—which had sent her to her death.

Suddenly all three were aware of hurrying feet coming through the street. It was a party of armed men with torches.

"Here be the boys!" cried he of the bitten wrist joyously. "Now we'll nab

her. Now, my lady, ye shall pay me for this."

But Betty had risen to her full height, which was considerable for a woman, and sent out one despairing cry: "Siegfried!"

At the sound, a man, who appeared to be at the head of the band, detached himself from them and ran swiftly forward.

The two chairmen, seeing themselves about to be deprived of their prey, closed in on Betty. They grasped her roughly and were hustling her into the chair as this man, Siegfried Van Nostrand, came up.

He did not wait, as was his usual custom, for parley, but struck one of the men with the flat of the unsheathed sword he carried in his hand. "Halt, there, you villains!" he cried. "I am Siegfried Van Nostrand. Who is this lady you are persecuting?"

But the chairman's blood was up. "I don't care if you be. If you be a good subject of King William, you will not abet this Papist jade as is going to the bishop's palace—like enough to plan another assassination—and has bit poor Robin here like a she-devil, as she is."

Van Nostrand got the second chairman by the collar and whirled him around. "Take your dirty hands off the lady," he commanded.

"I tell thee, Muster Van Nostrand, we be only doin' of our duty. She axed us, broad and aboveboard, to take her to t'owd bishop's palace."

"What of that?" said Van Nostrand angrily. "Take up your chair and carry her back to my house or to Hogsden Gardens, whichever she wants. Here are my men to go with you."

Betty felt herself raised on the bearers' shoulders.

"Lord be good to us, Muster Van Nostrand, 'tis as much as any man's life is worth to go about t'owd bishop's palace this night, wi' your men or wi'out 'em."

Betty put a pale face out of the window of the chair. "I want to go to my uncle's," she declared. "I will not go back to your house, sir;" and while they parleyed, Van Nostrand apparent-

ly resolute to return her, like an unsatisfactory purchase, Betty terrified but stubborn, the men as obdurate, there came a sound of hooting from the north end of the square.

"The mob!" yelled the chairmen, and dropped the chair.

"Take her up and carry her to my house!" roared Van Nostrand. "Lift her, I say!" But the chairmen had taken to their heels, and were half-way to Covent Gardens by way of a neighboring alley.

"Two of you men carry the chair," ordered Van Nostrand now, in composed and collected tones.

Two amateur chairmen, who rocked poor Betty's prison cruelly, took up the chair, and the party hurried off toward James Street; but in three minutes more they were in the midst of the mob. It was no question then of Orangeman or Papist. The mob had been looting the lower part of the town, and were drunk on conquest.

It became a matter of fighting, and Lady Betty discovered, once for all, whether or not she had married a coward. Grasping the sill of the little window in her chair-side, this daughter of a hundred warriors looked down on a sea of faces so distorted with passion and so seared with hatred that the divine image was almost stamped out of them. There were among them women with their hair disheveled, their clothing half torn from their backs, screaming, fighting, brandishing whatever weapon they could pick up, and freezing the onlooker with the horror of their aspect and utterances.

Lady Betty saw her husband form his men into a sort of wedge, the chair enclosed in the larger end, while he himself, with drawn sword, led at the apex. His commands came quick and sharp.

"Don't let the chairmen get hurt, for then my lady will be at their mercy. Now, every one of you! We must cut our way through."

The flying wedge passed through the mob, not without loss to its members; and Betty saw many a distorted face

go down before the pikes and halberds of Van Nostrand's men. They had won to the other side of the square, and were drawing into James Street, when Van Nostrand fell, knocked down by a great stone.

"Here! Put him here," panted Betty, pushing at the door of her chair; and two of the men brought him and laid him in her arms, that closed tightly around the heavy, inert figure. Siegfried had won his kingdom; he was clasped close to that turbulent, rebellious, passionate heart of Betty's—the heart that had seemed so shut against him.

When Van Nostrand came to himself he was in the hallway of his own house, his head in a woman's lap, a circle of frightened servants about them, and by his side a leech with basin and cloths.

He looked up into his wife's pale, tear-wet countenance, where she hung over him. Her rich dark hair, from which the powder had been shaken, curtained both their faces.

"Nay, put up the lancet," she said impatiently to the leech. "You need not bleed him; he is conscious; he has opened his eyes."

Betty said truly. Her husband's eyes were open, indeed. She read their meaning with a throbbing heart; and, careless of onlookers, bent down and kissed tenderly first one heavy lid, then the other. Her pale face was rosy once more as she whispered to him, within that curtain of dark hair: "Sweetest eyes in all the world! Oh, Siegfried, how could I bear to hint I wished they were black?"

And Van Nostrand, answering, murmured something in Dutch—even that hated sound could not mar Betty's happiness. Looking up in her face, he translated fondly:

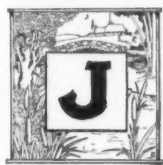
"You forgot to give me a gift, Betty; so I went into the street, and e'en found my own best *geschenke*, and brought it home."

"Home!" echoed Lady Betty's full voice; and the one word said all.



The WINNING of MISS TILLINGHAST

by Cyrus Townsend Brady



JOHN FORBES thought Elizabeth Tillinghast was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. He was persuaded also that she was as wise and as witty as she was charming. When a man, from whatever cause, waits until he is forty-five for his first love, his passion is apt to be a consuming fire. It was in this case. Miss Tillinghast had experienced several first loves during the quarter of a century which had elapsed since her birth, but she had survived them all, and the unusualness of the present situation had moved her to extend an interested observation—perhaps I would better say, to develop a receptive mood—so far as John Forbes was concerned; for she was distinctly pleased and flattered by the attentions of this great financier.

Miss Tillinghast came from the oldest, the proudest, the most exclusive family in the commonwealth—God save it! She and Forbes did not move in the same social circles. Prior to their meeting, Forbes moved in no social circle at all, while Miss Tillinghast moved in a very small one. That their orbits should have intersected was due to a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances—felicitous for Forbes and no less happy, in the end, for Miss Tillinghast.

Forbes was worth any woman's serious consideration, even though that woman were the heir of a hundred Tillinghasts, who might have been earls or dukes long since if they had

remained in the land of the real Vere de Veres whence they came. Contrary to popular opinion, Forbes, though he was a financial magnate, a monetary Colossus, was not a combination of sixteenth century freebooter and Macchiavelli—he was not a cold-hearted buccaneer with a soul like an ice-floe and a brain like Newton's. What he had obtained he had acquired by industry, ability, and courage, beginning, of course, with that upon which all of the qualities of success rest—frugality.

Hard work and high thinking had grayed his hair, lined his brow, and somewhat stooped his shoulders. But since he had met Miss Tillinghast he had become erect again, looking the world in the face as a young man fronting the future should. There was a cloud, however, on the career of this Admirable Crichton of finance and trade. Before he had settled down he had wandered from the narrow path. Nay, he had jumped from it, and had started headlong for the proverbial end to which that path does not lead. In less than a year he had almost wrecked himself and his nascent fortunes. Then he had pulled himself together and got back on the path which thereafter had been his highway. During the interregnum he had drunk, he had gambled, he had dissipated, he had almost lost his self-respect, but he had never stolen. What he had spent had been his own money, as it had been his own constitution. Thank God, he had stopped before it had been too late! Thereafter he had sickened of everything in life, social, that is, even the good things,

and had devoted himself to his business.

When this lapse occurred he had been too insignificant a man to attract attention. He had lived then in a distant city. Now that he had become rich and famous, he never referred to it, never told any one about it. It was a well-hid, therefore a well-kept, secret. He was proud of his good name, his unblemished reputation for probity and commercial honor; prouder of these than anything, unless it were his love for Miss Tillinghast.

Business had led Forbes into politics. One of his activities was merchandizing, another was railroading. He had refused to contribute, in the form of blackmail, to political organizations, for franchises and business opportunities which ought to be at the service of every citizen freely. He had incurred the enmity of the machine, and grimly proceeded to attack it with the same acumen, the same concentration, and the same success that he had employed in developing his business interests. To carry on his great enterprises, to fight the political ring which dominated the city, and to marry Miss Tillinghast—these were his ambitions, these were his life. His business affairs prospered exceedingly; he was richer than ever. The political warfare was being waged in a manner highly satisfactory to him. If he could have been as easy in his mind as to the outcome of his love-affair, the spring evening he walked up the steps of Miss Tillinghast's house on the avenue, he would have been supremely happy.

Forbes was a bold man, yet he had in the most extraordinary manner deferred laying the state of his heart before Miss Tillinghast. Those who can cheerfully lift Hercules from the ground, or counter the hammer of Thor, shrink before the petty arrow of a baby god. Forbes trembled, actually trembled, as he ascended the steps, for to-night he had determined to end it, one way or the other. He felt as though he carried an unsigned death-warrant in his hand, his own; as though he were bringing it to the powers that

were to see whether the signature of the last authority would be appended, or the warrant be destroyed.

II.

Never had Miss Tillinghast looked more beautiful than when she entered the drawing-room that evening.

"I am very sorry we are going to the opera to-night, Mr. Forbes," she said, with apparent regret. "I can only give you a few moments."

"I know," answered Forbes. "A few moments is all I require. That's why I came to-night."

"Yes?" said Elizabeth interrogatively.

"If I had hours before me I should postpone my—er—communication, and the evening would go like the others."

"I should not have thought that you, of all men, would ever procrastinate."

It was a fortunate lead. He followed it without hesitation.

"Nor will I. Miss Tillinghast, you know who I am, what I am. I shall say nothing further as to that, but perhaps you do not know that I love you."

"I do know it, Mr. Forbes."

"Well, you cannot know to what extent; how deep, how overwhelming, is my feeling. I—forgive my mentioning it—I have had some success in life. It is nothing, absolutely nothing—the man was measuring himself by the material as he had done through life, but now in order to achieve the spiritual—"beside the winning of your affection. All that I am, all that I may be"—he was wise in that he did not say "all that I have"—"is in the balance, with you on the other side. I do not undervalue myself—no successful man ever does that—yet I could not overvalue you. It would be an ineffable condescension if you would marry me; if maybe you do—you could—care a—little."

His fluency, his self-possession, were all gone. He stood miserable and uncertain before her—a young goddess! Why should she—

"Mr. Forbes," said Elizabeth slowly—she had stood quite still, her head slightly bent, a little smile upon her

lips, listening to his avowal—"I wish to be entirely fair to you. You are the kind of a man who is always fair to others, and you deserve the same treatment. I like you very much. I believe I like you better than anybody I know. I almost"—she hesitated and looked up, flashing one swift glance at him—"I almost believe that I love you. Wait," she added quickly, putting out her hand to check his impetuous movement. "You, I suppose, have been in love a great many times."

"I have known practically no women, Miss Tillinghast, and it would make no difference if I had known thousands. I had other things to think of until you came into my life. Now I have none but you."

The girl hesitated before replying, as if lost in deep thought.

"I have been in love," she said, at last. "At least, I thought that I was, but it was not like the feeling I have for you. You are older than I. I think it is as much admiration for your qualities"—he lifted a deprecating hand—"oh, yes," she continued, "for your great qualities. I respect you, your high principles, your noble life. If your record were not so absolutely clear—"

"Stop, Miss Tillinghast!"

Forbes could have confronted an army with banners without flinching, but now his face was white and drawn, his lips set. She stared at him in amazement, not unmingled with terror.

"My business reputation, I believe," he began, in a strained voice, as if forcing himself to meet an accusation; "no one can question. My life for many years has been seen and known of men. There was a time—"

The woman looked at him quickly, apprehensively.

"It was twenty-five years ago, Miss Tillinghast. I was a boy. I went wrong. No, there was nothing that prevents my marrying you. It was just a common, vulgar story—maybe I was a common, vulgar boy. You know I had no advantages except those I have gained. I could not let you go on without telling you this."

"Mr. Forbes," said the woman impulsively—when he noticed that she drew away from him he made no movement to follow her—"what you have told me puts another face upon the matter. I do not blame you. I mean that I have no right to know anything as to your past conduct or—"

"You have every right to know all there is about me," interrupted the man promptly.

"Yes," continued the other proudly, "I may be foolish, doubtless I am. I do not feel as if I could marry an angel if his record were not absolutely unspotted from the beginning. We Tillinghasts have something to uphold in this day of commercialism and democracy. Our family honor is unblemished. We can have no fellowship with wrongdoing, even though repented of. That is the true heritage of long descent for us. There can never be any alliance between— I respect you, and whether I should have accepted you or not under other circumstances, I cannot say; but now—"

"Elizabeth," exclaimed Forbes vehemently, "I've been a hard, a self-contained man, doubtless. I know little of romance, less of love, save what I have learned since I saw you. Isn't there any feeling in your heart? Is it all a matter of long descent and established reputation?"

"Now it is," replied the woman softly. "If I loved you enough, my principles might fly out of the window when you asked me to marry you. I don't know. But I do not love you that way."

"Do you love any one else that way?"

"No, else I should not have listened to you a moment. I have thought of this possibility, I will confess, and—"

"Yes, I suppose everybody saw that I loved you."

"No, not everybody, but I did, and, liking you so much and esteeming you so highly, I had begun to fancy that perhaps—but now—"

The man lifted his hands to his face a moment, and then tore them away. His manhood would not allow him to give way.

"Oh, God!" he said, "that one year of—hell! Is that going to damn me forever?"

There was that passion, that last touch of entreaty, in his voice that moved the woman profoundly.

"I—I don't know," she said uncertainly. "I could not bear it if—after—if I—if we—it should come out that you had——"

"It will come out," returned the man, with blunt honesty; "those things always do. Every blackguard and scoundrel in the city is my enemy. They will find it out. Naturally, I am not proud of it. I have never mentioned it to a soul. I would do my best to keep it quiet, but it will come out, in the end."

"Yes," assented the woman, "it will come out."

"Well, then, your final decision?"

He spoke harshly, abruptly. He could not speak in any other way. Not because he felt so, but because the strain upon him was so great.

"I cannot give it to you now."

"You have given it to me," answered Forbes. "Poor as I am without you, I am not mean enough to take you unless I have some measure, some hope, of your affections; certainly not unless I can have all your respect."

He turned away. The girl stretched out her hand toward him, but he did not see. He walked slowly to the door, and then faced her once more.

"Good-by," he said. "This is the end of it all. A boy's fault, a man's failure. I played, I pay. I am sorry that I have not always been what I should have been, but, you see, I did not know that you were at the end of the path. I do not blame you. You have done right."

He was gone.

That night Elizabeth Tillinghast did not go to the opera. She had other things to think of.

III.

John Forbes lived alone in a bachelor apartment-house on a retired street near the business center of the city.

When he let himself in that night, his man informed him that a visitor was awaiting him.

"Who is it, Summers?" asked Forbes.

"The chief of police, sir," said the man.

"The chief of police!"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he?"

"In the library."

"Very good. I will see him there."

The chief of police was naturally one of the leading members of the municipal administration which Forbes had so terrified by his previous attacks, and which he was still fiercely fighting. The biennial election was approaching, and the ring in control was at last convinced that unless something could be done to head off Forbes and quiet the opposition it would be ousted and the books would be opened. The object of his call upon Forbes was strictly political, but the chief of police had a reputation for brazen effrontery, which made him the best possible medium of communication between the ring and the enemy.

"Good evening, Mr. Forbes," said the official suavely.

"Good evening," answered Forbes curtly. He despised the chief of police. "What can I do for you?"

"I want to see you about a little business."

"For business matters you can see me at my office to-morrow. I do not transact business at night."

"I guess you'll transact this business, though, Mr. Forbes."

"Oh, do you? What is it?"

"Well, sir, I want to tell you that this administration is getting tired of your slanderous attacks upon it."

"Indeed!"

"And what's more, it's got to stop."

"Ah!"

"And I'm here to tell you so."

"So I perceive."

These non-committal replies on the part of Forbes visibly nettled the blustering official.

"Well, are you going to let up?" he asked threateningly.

"My dear sir, you may inform your principals——"

"I am a principal myself."

"I believe that. You are probably primarily concerned in all the rascality and venality of the city ring."

"Damnation!" exclaimed the man, starting to his feet.

"Sit down. I wouldn't swear if I were you," said Forbes coolly. Such was his savage temper, a result of his hopeless love-affair, that he would have liked nothing better than to grapple with the man in a rough-and-tumble fight. However, he continued quietly: "So soon as the ring is broken up, the administration power defeated, and the city purged of you and others of like kidney, I will be silent. Not before."

"You'll be silent now and hereafter."

"You said that before."

"I mean it. We're onto you. I've put the city detective force on your tracks. There ain't a thing that you've done since you come here"—when the chief of police became excited he shook himself free from grammatical bondage—"twenty odd years ago, that we don't know."

"There is nothing that I have done in twenty years that you and the world are not welcome to know," said Forbes calmly enough, although he realized what was coming.

"That ain't all," continued the chief, leering at him triumphantly; "we've gone back over your whole career, and we know all about your doings before you come here. See? You pose for a highly moral man——"

"I do not pose as anything."

"Well, the people set you up to be. That's how you've got your pull agin' us fellows," said the chief, making this incautious admission innocently. It was the only innocent attribute of the chief that night, therefore it should not be overlooked. "And we propose, unless you agree to head your crowd off and shut up yourself, to show you up for a drunken, dissolute, gambler——"

"That's what you propose, is it?" interrupted Forbes coldly.

"Yes. Ain't it enough?"

For answer the capitalist struck a bell on his desk.

"Summers," he said, "ask Mr. Johnson to come here. Ah, Mr. Johnson, this is the chief of police—my private secretary, Chief—— He has a statement to make concerning me which I wish you to take stenographically."

"Wha—what!" gasped the astounded official. "You don't mean you're fool enough to tell him what I said! You don't mean to give the whole thing away yourself!"

"I do. Speak!"

The bewildered chief stared at the others.

"Perhaps I can supplement your memory," said Forbes. "This—gentleman"—the chief winced at the title in the way it was bestowed—"the head of the detective force of the city, has called his men away from their regular duties, which, in view of the number of undetected criminals, are sufficiently pressing, to investigate me. Have you that down, Mr. Johnson?"

"Yes, sir."

"You needn't go away, Summers; I want you also," Forbes continued; then, turning rapidly, dictated further to the secretary: "They have not found anything in my career during the odd twenty years I have lived here of any value to them. Before I came to this city, just at the beginning of my start in life—manhood life, that is—I nearly went to smash. There was little to which I did not descend. To my shame and sorrow I admit it. Wine, women, gambling, everything that was immoral, although I did nothing which rendered me liable under the law—did you find anything that did that?"

"No," blurted out the chief, before he thought; "not that, but"—he stopped abruptly—"I've got nothin' to say. I don't know what you're drivin' at."

"Did you get all that down, Mr. Johnson?"

"Yes, sir."

"Nevertheless, the chief of police came here to-night to threaten me, that unless I ceased my warfare on this corrupt, debauched administration, of

which he is one of the leading lights, I should be exposed in the daily papers and discredited so far as it could be done. It is an outrageous and unparalleled betrayal of trust. It is as cowardly an attempt at blackmail as is on record, and it has failed, completely. I may be brought low, but in my falling, the administration will be irreparably defeated and destroyed. The people will see to that. Now I want you to make typewritten copies of this conversation, and see that they go to every paper in the city at once."

"It's all a lie!" shouted the chief. "I never said, I never done, anythin' of the kind!"

"Beg pardon, sir," interrupted Summers demurely.

"What is it, Summers?"

"Well, sir, you left the door opening into the drawing-room ajar, and——"

"You sneakin', eavesdroppin' hound!" shouted the chief.

"Not at all, sir," rejoined Summers spiritedly. "Begging your pardon, Mr. Forbes, I just caught one sentence: 'If you don't shut up we'll show you up,' and then I came away."

"Did you take that down, too, Mr. Johnson?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good! I think that's all. Let me see the statement after you have transcribed it. Summers, show this man out."

"Do you think anybody will believe you, backed up by that lackey, in the face of my denial?" blustered the chief.

"I don't think anything about it. I know that everybody will believe me. Do you suppose a man would say what I have about himself if it were not true? The door, sir!" said Forbes, standing erect and grim after he had himself flung it open.

The chief of police hesitated.

"Go!" said Forbes, locking his teeth together, clenching his hands and coming nearer. There was that in his voice and in his gesture that sent the chief like a whipped hound skulking down the hall. Only, he was snarling and cursing as no self-respecting dog could even imagine himself doing. Summers

followed hard upon his heels. At the door the chief turned on the valet. Summers was an Englishman and as strong as a bull.

"If you hit me," he said quietly, "so 'elp me Gawd, I'll mash you into pulp!"

There was nothing to be done. Like master, like man. Out of the door walked the baffled official, just able in his futile rage to recognize that his bold attempt had precipitated the absolute, utter ruin of the whole administration.

"Well," thought Forbes, after he had signed the statements and despatched the copies to the different papers, "she knew it. The whole world may as well know it. What's the difference now?"

IV.

The next morning the papers were full of it. They all printed the letter, of course. Those which supported the administration commented viciously upon the wolf in sheep's clothing who affected to lead the party of reform. The rest, without exception, lauded the decision and courage, and admired the manliness, of Forbes' drastic and heroic action. It was easy to be seen, even by the men in the street, that the administration had erected its own gallows. Indeed, the mayor made haste to disavow the action of the chief of police, and his resignation was summarily demanded. That deceived no one, however, for they all were in the same boat.

Forbes did not go down to his office at his usual hour that morning. For one thing, he had passed a sleepless night, and he was ill. Not on account of the dastardly attempt to blackmail him, which he had so successfully resisted, but because he realized that the publicity given regarding his past life would now forever put beyond the range of accomplishment even that faint possibility which, being human, he had cherished—that Miss Tillinghast might love him. He could not remember having had a headache before for a score of years. It was late when he dressed. He dawdled over his breakfast, and

when he had finished it he repaired to the library and did nothing. For the first time in twenty-five years he was idle, listless, wretched. There the faithful Summers presently found him.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Forbes."

"What is it?"

"A lady to see you, sir."

"What lady?"

"She gave no name, sir, but said that she must see you on important business and——"

"Bring her in here."

A few moments after the lady was ushered into the room.

"Miss Tillinghast! My God!" exclaimed Forbes, staring at her. "What are you doing here?"

"I came—you know——"

For once the self-possession upon which she prided herself entirely left Miss Tillinghast, and she faltered, stopped, and stared at her lover. How haggard, how worn, he looked! She forced herself to go on at last.

"You—you left me last night so abruptly that I—oh, you make it so hard for me to speak! Why don't you help me?"

"Wait, Miss Tillinghast," said the man quickly. He had the popular idea that women never read the papers. "You don't know, you don't understand. What I told you last night has been discovered. I said that it would be found out and brought to light, and now everybody knows it. It's in every morning paper in the city."

"I know," said the woman.

"What!"

"Yes, I have read them all. That's why I came."

"You don't mean," said the man amazedly, "that you——"

The woman nodded, stretched out her hands to him, her face suffused with color, her eyes shining with tears, yet with a smile upon her lips.

"You don't mean that you will marry me after that?"

"Yes," said Elizabeth bravely, "I mean more than that."

"More than that?"

"I mean that I—I love you."

He was closer to her now.

"It cannot be," he protested.

"Yes."

"It isn't pity, it isn't——"

"It's nothing but love, if I know the word. After you had gone I was sure of it, and this morning, when I heard how noble, how brave, you had been, I could hardly wait to come. I am so proud of you!"

She caught his hand, and before he could prevent it, she bent and touched it with her lips.

"Dearest," laughed the man, as if he had been a boy, "don't waste a kiss there."

There was a knock on the door. This time all the doors were closed. Entered the faithful Summers.

"Beg pardon, sir," said that invaluable adjunct to the following of Forbes, "but here is something I thought you would like to see at once, sir."

He handed his master the five o'clock edition of one of the daily papers, although it was then but ten o'clock in the morning.

"What is it, Summers?" asked Forbes, frowning a little. He did not care to be interrupted just at this juncture.

"It's there, sir," said Summers, pointing, and then discreetly bowing himself out.

"What does this mean?" gasped Forbes, staring at a display notice in large type. "The engagement is officially announced of Mr. John Forbes and Miss Elizabeth Tillinghast," he read. "Who did it?" he cried.

"I did," said the woman. "I wanted it to appear just as soon after your letter as possible. I wanted everybody to know what I think of you. It will mean something," she went on, with pardonable family pride, "this approval of your course by the Tillinghasts—John. I told them at the house last night that you had proposed to me, and that I had accepted you."

"But then you hadn't——"

"I have now, and that's enough," said the woman decisively.

"God bless the chief of police!" exclaimed Forbes, taking her in his arms.

THE-AMERICAN-DRAMATIST-IN-THE CHARACTER-OF-PETER-PAN



The American dramatist, unlike his European contemporary, persists in his immaturity, hence his resemblance to Peter Pan. "The Little Gray Lady"; a delicate matter skillfully handled. "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt" and "The Galloper" suggest some contrasts in the art of writing plays. Other features of the late winter season



HE American Dramatist in the Character of Peter Pan?" queried The Lady Who Goes to the Theater With Me. "What do you mean by that?"

"Mean by which?" I asked, in turn. "The American Dramatist or *Peter Pan*?"

"I can't understand your coupling them in that way," she said.

So, we went again to see "The Galloper" and "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt."

Each of these two is an entertaining play. Richard Harding Davis wrote the first, and the second came from the pen of Alfred Sutro. If the authorship had been reversed, "The Galloper" would have been flawless, and "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt" would have been the dullest drivel imaginable.

This sounds as though I wanted to say that Mr. Sutro is a cleverer man than Mr. Davis, which I shouldn't want to suggest if it were true—and it isn't. The point is that Mr. Sutro's skill would have made a faultless comedy out of Mr. Davis' excellent ideas, and that Mr. Davis, having little skill, could have done nothing with the ideas in "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt," for the very Irish reason that there aren't

any. Now we have come to the point. Mr. Davis is a typical American dramatist, and the American dramatist is like *Peter Pan* in that he positively refuses to grow up.

The theatrical season just passing has been emphatically the year of the American dramatist. The public has realized as never before that foreign-built dramas must treat of characters, themes, and conditions that are foreign, too. Managers have spent much time and money in producing plays dealing with things fundamentally American. The result of all this is that nearly every one of the winter's successes has been American, not only in origin, but in every detail of spirit and place. "The Music Master," "The Girl of the Golden West," "The Squaw Man," "The Lion and the Mouse," "The Little Gray Lady," "Her Great Match," all are dramatic works the scenes of which are laid in this country, and whose stories, like their writers, are native to the soil.

What takes away from the charm of this situation is the undeniable fact that most of the popularity of the half-dozen plays named may be traced to their Americanism. The remainder of that popularity is due to the freshness and broad appeal, which hardly could slip through a mental rake run over this fertile land. "Her Great Match" was perhaps the only one of these six pieces

in which was exhibited any pronounced deftness in the handling of material, and thus we come to the truth that Clyde Fitch is about the only one of our writers for the stage who has altogether mastered his business. Add to his name that of Augustus Thomas, and there is not even room for debate. The rest of us, who bob up serenely one year and disappear from sight the next, have a plethora of ideas but a sad dearth of knowledge.

Any English dramatist who had seen five plays by Henry Arthur Jones could have written "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt," in which Ellis Jeffreys returned to us as a star at Daly's. In point of fact, the piece was nothing more nor less than Mr. Jones' "The Maneuvers of Jane," with an automobile substituted for a rowboat, and Miss Jeffreys for Winifred Emery. The people in the comedy weren't real people, and the conditions which pressed the story into being weren't real conditions. There wasn't the slightest pretense at character-drawing. "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt," in other words, was simply a bit of glass which sparkled like a diamond because it had been beautifully polished. But for that polishing, which the French and the English seem to do so well, and which we have not yet learned to do at all, "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt" would have been about as fascinating as a week-end party at Richmond or a dramatization of one of those books of epigrams which we buy before Christmas.

Mr. Vandervelt, whose first name wasn't mentioned at the beginning of the piece, but was "Dennis" before its conclusion, fell in love with *Lady Clarice Howland*. He might have married her at once, and thus have made the play a curtain-raiser, but for the fact that he had a "past." The details of this "past" were not communicated to us, except in so far as they concerned what seemed to be rather an innocuous leaning toward a lawfully wedded young woman named *Brevell*. *Lady Clarice* was so exercised at this that she refused to consider engaging her-

self to Mr. Vandervelt, and so he took her motoring, arranged that the car should break down, and confessed frankly that, after being absent overnight in his company, he expected the heroine of the exploit to be extremely glad to marry him. Instead, the heroine aforesaid got the car repaired, returned to her home alone, and gave her hand and heart to a talkative old prig named *Raynor*. The virility and importance of the play will be manifest when you learn that the climax of the first act was the expression of Mr. Vandervelt's hymeneal intentions, the climax of the second the departure of the pair on the motoring expedition, the climax of the third Mr. V.'s discovery that *Lady C.* had gone home without him, and the climax of the fourth the triumph of *Raynor*.

The only idea in "The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt" was the idea of *Lady C.* getting out of trouble by inducing an imbecile clergyman to put the car in shape and get her back to *Raynor*. This was a very good idea to begin with, but there wasn't enough of it to go 'round. It afforded an extremely clever third act—that in which Mr. V. was outwitted—and a great deal of very amusing conversation. Mr. Sutro would have done well, in fact, to have called his piece "a comedy of conversation." You can't build a whole second act on the question of whether or not two people should go motoring, and this is exactly what was attempted by the author of "The Walls of Jericho." The attempt reflects little credit on the invention of the dramatist, but a great deal of credit upon his skill. It takes a mighty clever man to make an omelet without eggs, and the sooner our Peter Pans learn the trick the sooner will they know what to do with the culinary plenty they have at hand.

"The Fascinating Mr. Vandervelt" was pretty well acted. Miss Jeffreys is an English Clara Bloodgood, lacking in mellowness, but with a manner the crisper and brighter for its hardness. Constance Walton contributed the best work seen in the production, really contriving to put some character into the

rôle of *Mrs. Brevell*. Claude King as *Raynor*, Rudge Harding as the clergyman, and Essex Dane—a woman, not a suburb of London—were particularly good. Most of the other creatures feminine in the cast gushed a good deal. Frank Worthing was set down on the program as *Mr. Vandervelt*, but we recognized him at once as Frank Worthing. His personality is always agreeable, and was particularly well suited to this part.

"The Galloper," a comic opera without music, which brought Raymond Hitchcock to the Garden Theater, was full of eggs. The omelet, however, was not nearly so smooth as that concocted by Mr. Sutro. *Kirke Warren* was war-correspondent in Greece for a mythical newspaper called *The Republic*. He became enamored of a lady in those parts and refused to correspond—or, at least, to leave the lady in favor of a mere war. *Copeland Schuyler*, on the other hand, wanted very much to hunt up this particular conflict, because the lady he loved, *Grace Whitney* by name, was going to the front as a nurse. If you ever were in love, you know that *Kirke Warren* stayed at home, and, if you ever saw a farce, you know that *Copeland Schuyler* took his name and place.

Mistaken identity may always be depended upon for comic situations, and that kind of mistaken identity which puts a coward in the position of a hero is especially prolific. *Schuyler's* masquerade got him into all sorts of trouble. It won *Miss Whitney* over to him promptly, as he had expected it to do, but it also brought upon his heels the divorced wife of *Warren*, in search of alimony, and the prospective bride of the same gentleman, in search of matrimony. The bogus war-correspondent knew very little about correspondence and still less about wars; and Mr. Davis had got him into a terrible tangle when eleven o'clock came along and straightened things out.

"The Galloper" was immensely amusing. It had the best first act I have ever found in a farce, together with a second act that I do not hesitate to rec-

ommend to persons who wish to "grow fat." The third act was a mistake. Mr. Davis wrote it when he was tired and wanted to get the whole play off his mind. Among other false notes, it contained a supposedly dramatic scene in which a Turkish officer made an improper proposal to the Red Cross nurse. That is what I mean about lack of skill. Mr. Sutro would never have committed a blunder like that if he had been working upon as full a set of materials as Mr. Davis had in "The Galloper."

Humor is so largely a matter of taste that there isn't much use talking about Raymond Hitchcock. I think he is the funniest comedian in America. Perhaps you don't. At any rate, go to see him as *Schuyler*, and drop me a line if he doesn't make you laugh. Edgar L. Davenport, L. Rogers Lytton, Herbert Corthell, T. Daniel Frawley, Scott Cooper, May Buckley, and Josie Sadler were members of the supporting company whose work commended itself to me. I don't like Nannette Comstock, for the same reason that I don't like sugar on an orange. Perhaps you prefer your oranges with sugar on them. As I said before, it's all a matter of taste.

The production of "The Little Gray Lady," by Maurice Campbell, at the Garrick Theater—afterward it moved to the Majestic—puts me in the position which I have dreaded since first I essayed to be a dramatist Doctor Jekyll and a critical Mr. Hyde. I wrote "The Little Gray Lady." This being true, I might perhaps be supposed to know more about the play than any mere outsider, but I encounter a universal unwillingness to believe that a man can have an impartial estimate of his own work. If I said "The Little Gray Lady" was bad, I should be accused of posing. If I said it was good, I should be convicted of prejudice. Accordingly, I shall confine myself to observing that "The Little Gray Lady" is an exemplification of all the theories and ideas that I have been setting forth in this and other magazines. I wrote "The Pit" because I had an opportunity

to do so. I dramatized "In the Bishop's Carriage" because I thought the piece would make a general appeal—and some money. I wrote "The Little Gray Lady" because I wanted to. If my view of the theater is wrong, so is that comedy; if right, so is "The Little Gray Lady." With this and an observation that I am not responsible for what appears in the headings of these articles, I abandon the attempt to enlist you for or against the comedy.

"The Little Gray Lady" was born and reared in Canton, Ohio. Her name was *Anna Gray*, and *Perriton Carlyle* called her "The Little Gray Lady," not because he longed to make a pun, or because her hair and clothes were gray—which they weren't—but because she was a plain, quiet, simple young woman. *Anna* loved *Perry*, and when she went to work in the treasury department at Washington she induced her congressman to find similar employment for her old playmate. *Carlyle*, however, was neither a strong nor an experienced man, and Washington rather turned his head. *Anna* had gone to *Mrs. Jordan's* boarding-house because she had met *Ruth Jordan* in the office. *Ruth* was all the things that *Anna* was not, and none of the things that *Anna* was. She was shallow, frivolous, artful, and very pretty. *Carlyle* came in contact with her, and that was the beginning of his undoing. Released from the feeling that he was bound to *Anna* by *Ruth's* statement that *Anna* loved *Sam Meade*, of the Secret Service, *Perry* was easily made to dance to the tune piped by *Miss Jordan*.

For another fellow that tune might not have been too fast, but to *Carlyle*, who had his mother to support and only one hundred dollars a month, theater-tickets and suppers meant ruin. Ruin meant drink, and drink meant the recollection of what he had heard about a method of putting together mutilated money so that the bogus bills could not be detected. "I'll put it back the first of the month," said *Carlyle*, as many another man has said. Then came the discovery of the peculation and the in-

evitable awakening. He was a thief. *Ruth Jordan* had no sympathy with a thief. *Anna* alone, loving him with all her soul, was willing to take his crime on her own shoulders if it would help him to get away. "You're not the little gray lady," *Carlyle* discovered. "You're the little gold lady—the little gold lady." Realizing this, *Perry* came back after he had consented to slip off, and, sure that *Anna* had been tricking him when she avowed herself in no danger, gave himself up to the police. *Meade* got him free, and *Anna*, giving him another chance, just as *The Girl of the Golden West* gave *Johnson* another chance, went away with him to begin life over again. The story was told as simply as possible, the four acts transpiring in the "back yard" of *Mrs. Jordan's* boarding-house, in *Anna's* room—"the second story front"—and in the treasury department. The actors were John W. Albaugh, Jr., William Humphrey, Charles A. Gay, Robert Ober, Cyril Vezina, Harry Wagner, Julia Dean, Dorothy Donnelly, Eva Vincent, Justina Wayne, and Rachel Barr.

I cannot dismiss the subject of "The Little Gray Lady" without first attempting to have understood one very widely misunderstood feature of the play. We are so used to the proposition that every leading man impersonates a hero and every leading woman a heroine that we cannot conceive a drama without these characters. *Perriton Carlyle* does not represent my idea of a hero, nor does *Anna Gray* embody my notion of a heroine. They are a man and a woman—or as nearly so as I could make them. I don't say that a chap who steals money is going to make an ideal husband, or that a girl who marries him does the best thing possible. My only claim is that a great many *Carlyles* who might have gone on being neither good nor bad are made useful citizens by just such an awakening as came to *Perry*. Rightly or wrongly, these men appeal to the elementally maternal in such women as *Anna*, and win a depth of devotion that could not be called forth by a creature

more fitted to receive such love but less in need of it. That I failed to make this generally comprehended is proof of the things I have written about lack of skill in the American Dramatist.

"Cashel Byron's Profession," dramatized by Stanislaus Stange from the novel by George Bernard Shaw, and a failure at Daly's, struck me as being a particularly good example of play-making. The presence in the cast of James J. Corbett proved fatal to the piece, since, although its principal character was a pugilist, and Mr. Corbett both looked and acted the part to advantage, the newspaper critics could not treat seriously the histrionic effort of a former prize-fighter. "The dead are dead," and no one reads obituaries to be entertained, so there is no need of devoting much space to "Cashel Byron." I will say, in passing, that the performance pleased and amused me. "The House of Silence," produced by James K. Hackett at the Savoy, I did not witness. I am not a first-nighter, and "The House" became totally silent shortly after it was opened to the public. "Grierson's Way," a play by H. V. Esmond, in which the star was Henry Miller, failed at the Princess, although I thought it wonderfully interesting. You are welcome to take my opinion of that tragedy and of "Cashel Byron's Profession" as evidence that I don't know anything about plays, "anyhow."

I am going to tell you the story of "Grierson's Way," because it may entertain you, and because there is no other way for you to learn the plot. *Grierson* loved a young woman named *Pamela Ball*. *Miss Ball* loved an army officer known as "*Beauty*" *Murray*. *Grierson* discovered that *Murray* was the father of a child about to be born to *Pamela*, and, since *Murray* was already married, he made the young woman his wife, so that her infant might be supposed to be his child. The pathos of this arrangement became tragedy when *Mrs. Grierson* discovered that *Mrs. Murray* had died shortly after the wedding, and that her lover was free to become her hus-

band. *Grierson*, knowing that he stood in the way of that happiness which it had been his aim to secure, killed himself. The story seemed to me to possess the elements of greatness, and it was worked out remarkably. Several of the characters were masterpieces, this statement applying particularly to a relic of manhood who had won fame as a violinist one day and lost his bow arm in a railway accident the next. If there is a more tragic idea than this in all fiction, you will find it in De Maupassant's "The Diamond Necklace"; otherwise, you would have far to seek. Mr. Miller did some of the best work of his career as *James Grierson*. The performance was well worth failing in.

Two inconsequent trifles, both acted at the Madison Square, were "The Brailsley Diamond" and "The Lucky Miss Dean." Neither survived long. Henry De Vries, a Dutch performer, made notable the entertainment of which the former play was a part by revealing unusual Protean ability in a one-act piece entitled "A Case of Arson." In this curtain-raiser Mr. De Vries endowed with distinction and life no fewer than seven separate characters, assuming all these rôles himself. This is a feat first attempted with conspicuous success by an Italian named Fregoli, but Mr. De Vries proved to be a fine character-actor, where Fregoli had won attention chiefly as a trickster. "A Case of Arson" survived "The Brailsley Diamond," and is now being presented in the vaudeville houses.

One of the few comic-opera productions of the winter, and one of the most agreeable, was "Mexicana," in which the Shuberts offered a large and capable company at the Lyric. The piece was by Clara Driscoll, a Texas writer, and Robert B. Smith, author of "Fantana," with music by Raymond Hubbell. It is fair to suppose that Miss Driscoll's residence was responsible for the selection of Mexico as a locale for this work, as her familiarity with the life there must have been responsible for the charm of its atmosphere. Mr. Smith probably contributed the plot,

which was about like other comic-opera plots, and created no great enthusiasm. Several of the lines in the libretto, however, and a number of the lyrics, were above the average. Mr. Hubbell's music was, excepting that of "Happy-land" and that of "Veronique," the best heard recently in New York. Among the whistleable numbers in the score were "The Fickle Weather-Vane," "United We Stand," "Graft," and "Supposing," the latter the legitimate successor to "Just My Style" in "Fantana." The opening chorus of "Mexicana" was especially delightful. The Shuberts provided, as they usually do under these circumstances, a production as lavish and beautiful as could be imagined. First honors for interpretation went to Christie MacDonald, as dainty and clever as she was in "The Sho-Gun," though Joseph Herbert was irresistibly comic, and Blanche Deyo contributed a pleasing dance. Edmund Stanley and Edward Martindell were notable for their good voices.

"The Vanderbilt Cup," which introduced Elsie Janis to Broadway as a star, achieved immediate success. Miss Janis became very popular last summer, when she was appearing in vaudeville at the New York Theater Roof-Garden, and her following was unusually eager that she should score. There was good reason for this feeling, the new star being surprisingly young and distinctly talented. Her vehicle was a stage form of the prevailing madness about automobiles. Whatever it had of plot concerned those modern Juggernauts, and the entire action of the piece centered about automobile breakdowns, automobile inns, and automobile races. The race was actually staged, and must be a thrilling mechanical effect when, as the boys say, "it works." It didn't "work" on any one of the three evenings I spent with Miss Janis at the Broadway Theater.

There are eight scenes in "The Van-

derbilt Cup." All of them are original, and one or two, like the interior of a hostelry corresponding with the Martha Washington, a hotel for women in New York, had great possibilities in the way of fun-making. Only one act, the last, proved at all dull. This portion of the entertainment was given up to Miss Janis' imitations, which are capital, and would have sufficed amply without a terribly boring ten-minute introduction to each one. Eleven o'clock is a little late for the constant recurrence of some such conversation as this:

"Let's have your imitation of Eddie Foy."

"Oh, really, I can't."

"Please do."

"It wouldn't amuse anybody."

"Indeed it would. Now go ahead."

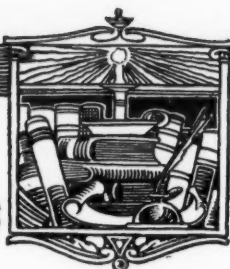
And so on, *ad nauseam*.

Much of the music in "The Vanderbilt Cup" proved exceptionally good; one melody, "The Little Chauffeur," singing itself for days after being heard, like Mark Twain's celebrated "Punch, Brothers, Punch." Otis Harlan, as "an attorney and other things," was droll for the first time since his appearance in "A Black Sheep." There were a lot of other clever people in the cast, but few of them had anything to do.

"Coming Thro' the Rye" filled some time at the Herald Square Theater. The piece was not the most interesting feature of the period covered in this article—a period more notable for the continuance of good plays already with us than for the introduction of new ones. About this time in the season theaters come to remind one of the puerile rhyme about the "Ten Little Indians." Ten little playhouses make productions every fortnight or so until one has a success—then there are nine. This goes on until there remain practically no places of amusement that have reason for making changes. It's hard on the reviewer, but lucky for the managers.



FOR BOOK LOVERS



Archibald Lowery Sessions

There are no reasonable grounds upon which to rest a distinction between the two sexes in the matter of the authorship of fiction. Individuality, which gives character to a story, is not limited or molded by the influence of sex alone. "A Maker of History," "The Debtor," "Mr. Scraggs," "Nedra," among the successful new books. The twenty-five best selling books



It is not altogether a matter of wonder that so many fantastic notions find their way into print nowadays, considering the multitude of people who are writing for publication, and the competition of publishers for new books. Neither authors nor publishers can reasonably complain of any lack of encouragement, given or received, to produce grotesque opinions. The great difficulty in the situation is due to the scarcity of material and not to the lack of workmen or to the facilities for distribution; to a dearth of ideas rather than to the means by which they may be given currency. The natural result is a tendency to substitute effects for ideas, under the mistaken impression that the operation produces something original and fresh.

An illustration of this is to be found in a recent attempt to show that there is an essential and characteristic difference between the masculine and feminine treatment of a story; that a woman's necessarily differs from that of a man because she is a woman, and not because she has a distinct and separate individuality as a human being. This, of course, involves the implication that it is possible, upon analysis of the story, to detect the man's or the woman's hand in it; it means, further, that the

better the story the more certain will be the results of the analysis, because the more predominating the personality of the author.

Merely as a matter of entertaining speculation, or as a subject of conversation after more profitable topics have been exhausted, it has its uses, perhaps. But beyond this, its value is fanciful. Every critical reader of fiction knows from his own experience, and will, if he is sincere, admit, that he can do no more than make a more or less fortunate guess at the sex of an anonymous author. The appearance, five or six years ago, of "An Englishwoman's Love Letters" provoked all sorts of conjectures as to the book's authorship, but there was an utter lack of intelligent or reasonable argument to indicate the author's sex, and, as long as the secret was well guarded, one guess was as good as another.

The professional reader of manuscripts, who reads and critically weighs a greater mass of fiction than other people have any conception of, and is therefore in a position to decide the question, will bear witness to its futility.

After all, human nature, which is the vital factor in the telling of a good story, is very much the same in men and women both; its phenomena are so nearly invariable as to make any attempt at classification on the basis of

sex absolutely unreliable. A story wins success because of the appeal it makes, in one way or another, to some widely shared human experience or emotion, and the rewards for the writing of such stories are, on the whole, very impartially distributed between both sexes. Feminine readers of fiction are commonly supposed to be in the majority, and the facts show that they read as many books by men as by women; from which it is only fair to conclude that, intrinsically, sex has very little influence upon the kind or quality of an acceptable story.



"Double Trouble," by Herbert Quick, Bobbs-Merrill Company, as the title of a story of dual personality, may, if the reader is so inclined, be interpreted as a more or less subtle expression of the author's cynical views of life. Very possibly, nothing of the kind was intended by Mr. Quick, but there are incidents enough in the story itself to make such a conclusion seem reasonable. But however that may be, he has presented a very entertaining and readable book, with a plot ingenious, plausible, and clear-cut, brightened by a good deal of genuine humor.

Two more incongruous characters than Florian Amidon, the respectable, upright banker—staid, conventional, diffident, celibate, unsocial; and Eugene Brassfield, the hustling business man, sport, politician, club man, and "all around good fellow" and "mixer," with all the delinquencies that the terms imply, cannot be imagined. The consequences of bringing together two such personalities in one individual were mystifying, not to say embarrassing, to both, as well as humorous to a disinterested spectator.

Fortunately for the story, Mr. Amidon, of Hazlehurst, lost sight of himself, so to speak, for a period of five years, long enough for Mr. Brassfield to establish himself as a strenuous citizen of Bellevale. Thereafter, the two personalities alternated in their possession of the *corpus*, as the lawyers say,

to the distress of both and the confusion of their friends. Amidon, however, had the advantage of the expert advice of a professional occultist, and the story ends as it should.



E. Phillips Oppenheim is by all odds the most successful among the writers of that class of fiction which, for want of a better term, may be called "mystery stories." His eminence in his special field of work is due, more than anything else, to a certain distinction of literary style, which lends plausibility to almost any kind of situation or incident or complication of plot. His craftsmanship is of the finished sort, that, without forcing itself upon one's attention, is gratifying to the sense of artistic unity. With a gift such as he has, he may use material which, in other hands, would be unmanageable.

In none of his previous books is his skill more apparent than in the latest, "A Maker of History," published by Little, Brown & Co. For this, Mr. Oppenheim has taken, as the kernel for his story, the attack of the Russian Baltic fleet upon the English fishermen, the entente between England and France, and the German kaiser's subterranean diplomacy. It begins with a bit of paper, apparently harmless, but which involves an inoffensive young Englishman, Guy Poynton; his sister, and their friend, Sir George Duncombe, in a series of adventures with the police and diplomatic systems of four European governments. The train of intrigue and plotting, in which even servants are mixed up, reminds one a little of the absorbing complications of Dumas and Gaboriau. That any grave international consequences should depend upon a single sheet of paper of course seems unlikely, and that the mere finding of it by a comparatively insignificant individual should be a matter of serious danger to him appears even less probable. But one has only to read "A Maker of History" to see how extremely plausible both may be.

A fine story of the wilds of the Hudson Bay Territory is "Jules of the Great Heart," by Lawrence Mott, Century Company. As a story of outdoor life—and it is essentially that—it possesses the peculiar fascination which is always exercised over the imagination by man's encounters with any of the hostile forces of nature. Jules Verbeaux, the hero of the tale, is a French-Canadian trapper, and the adventures that are described in the book were most of them experienced by him in the midst of weather conditions practically arctic. The dangers of the frozen wilderness which he was obliged to face alone are sufficiently dramatic of themselves, but they are not all.

Pursuing his vocation independently, he is naturally and inevitably involved in a conflict with the owners of fur privileges in the territory represented by the agents of the Hudson Bay Company. Thus the story resolves itself into an account of a man hunt, the relentless pursuit of Jules by the Canadian Indians in the employ of the company. If there is any defect in the construction of the story, it is to be found in the unvarying similarity of the devices by means of which Jules successfully evades his enemies. One cannot but think that even Canadian Indians would, after repeated experiences, refuse to be misled.

Nevertheless, the story is interesting and well told, and probably most readers will be further pleased by the devotion of Jules to the erring but finally repentant and loving Marie.

Alice Brown has brought together in "Paradise," Houghton, Mifflin & Co., an extremely interesting collection of characters. They are the sort of people her readers are most familiar with—the quaint rural New England type, whose outlook upon life, in spite of its restrictions, is tempered by a shrewd philosophy, and even occasionally lighted by a little sentiment.

Barbara, Malory Dwight, Ann Parsons, and Nick Jameson, each makes his or her special appeal to the reader,

but it is doubtful if any one of them, or all of them together, will produce as deep an impression as Uncle Timmie Gale. Uncle Timmie has led a scrupulously upright life for forty years, and is filled with regrets at the thought of his lost opportunities. He is too old now to do anything to shock his neighbors. "If I was younger I'd break through an' do suthin' to make their hair stan' up. But it's too late. I can't take no real interest in them things, as I could if I'd done 'em when I ought to; an', besides, I've lived a righteous life till it's rotted me. I'm all punk, that's what I be." He rebels against the conformity which society demands, and makes the mistake of supposing that it is the moral law that oppresses and enslaves him.

With the exception, perhaps, of Ann Parsons, the other characters are of a more or less conventional type, but what they have to say and do is none the less interesting on that account. Malory Dwight's vacillation as between Barbara and Lindy is in strong contrast to Nick's constancy, and it is from that very fact that the book derives its chief elements of strength.



Mr. George Barr McCutcheon has written a story—and Dodd, Mead & Co. have published it—to which he has given a title that may be read backward or forward as the reader chooses, with equal facility and significance. While it would not be altogether correct to say the same thing of the story itself, yet it is true that Mr. McCutcheon has juggled with his plot, so that it makes little difference whether the book is called "Nedra" or "Arden."

The fact that this preposterous tale has promptly taken its place as one of the "best sellers" seems to be an indication that almost any combination of printed pages bearing the name of the author of the Graustark stories would enjoy the same distinction; and as it has no other, charitably inclined people will not quarrel with author and publishers for any satisfaction they can gather from that fact.

The chief significance of the book's popularity is the evidence it affords of an almost ravenous appetite for grotesque nonsense.



"The Debtor," by Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman, Harper & Brothers, is a book that can be described only by saying that if you like this kind of a story, this is the kind of a story you will like. It is one of those books the success of which—and it is one of the "best sellers"—produces a state of hopeless confusion as to what popular taste in fiction is or should be. If there is really any quality, inherent in the story, to justify the reception given to it by critics and readers, it is too subtle and elusive to be formulated; so that one is only left to speculate as to the particular superstition which gives Mrs. Freeman's work currency.

The scheme of the tale is simple enough, yet it is laboriously expanded into a book of five hundred and sixty-three pages. Captain Arthur Carroll is a Southern gentleman who, having lost all his property through the dishonesty of an associate, regulates his life upon the familiar principle that it is cheaper to move than pay rent, and so maintains a sort of peripatetic establishment, remaining in one town only so long as the local tradesmen will give him credit. The story has caught him and his family in one of their pauses between flights, in the town of Banbridge, and gives a painfully minute description of how the captain operated. If one is willing to forego embarrassing inquiries into the means by which the impecunious gentleman was able to bring with him a very showy outfit, including horses and carriages, and fine clothes for himself and his women-folk, one need not be troubled about probabilities or improbabilities. But any reader who insists upon accuracy in local color and characterization will be dissatisfied.

It is hardly necessary to say that the five hundred and sixty-three pages bring happy marriages to the captain's two daughters, and moral and financial regeneration to the captain himself.

Anybody introduced by Red Saunders is entitled to a cordial reception and an impartial hearing. Henry Wallace Phillips and The Grafton Press have been made the means for the introduction of "Mr. Scraggs" in a series of seven stories, in which that gentleman picturesquely tells of some of his experiences, incidentally reviewing a few of the reasons which have led to his more or less somber views of life. His matrimonial adventures constitute his chief claim to gloomy distinction, and when the fact is revealed that, as a Mormon, he has thirteen living wives, his depression can be, to some extent, understood and appreciated. One of the stories tells how he acquired the fourteenth, and explains the comfort that she brought him and why.

With the usual capability that he showed in other matters, one is tempted to ask whether or not he is exaggerating his domestic troubles; the reader, at any rate, will be disposed to make light of them.

Mr. Scraggs is a highly entertaining individual, and he does not anywhere appear to better advantage in this respect than in his description of the visit of Major and Mrs. Pumpey to the drug-store of Hadds & Scraggs. Any one who can read this account without a laugh is as hopeless a hypochondriac as Mr. Scraggs professes to be.

In spite of his funereal aspect, he nevertheless maintains, against his will, perhaps, a very robust interest in human nature and human events. It is a good, wholesome book, because it is full of hearty laughs.



It is not much to be wondered at that the account of Ladislav Moniuszko's American experiences, written by Rupert Hughes and published by the Century Company, should be called "Zal," if, as we are told, that word is the Polish equivalent for homesickness. It seems to us that homesickness would be an inevitable result of such a "write-up," though, of course, we cannot exactly estimate the degree of sympathy

exacted of the press-agent by the artistic temperament, or whether such sympathy must be real or only an appearance. If he could be satisfied with the latter, it is not entirely clear why Ladislav should have suffered from *zal*. He was a great pianist, greater than Paderewski, and as such, being able to produce an effect upon Rose Hargrave so that her mind was "a-shuttle with vague fantasies," he should have understood that the America of the strenuous press-agent, who utilizes such facts, is the real home of genius.

Of course, Ladislav was unappreciated at first—else there would have been no story to tell—but his art enforces recognition, and how it did it is the story, supplemented by the necessary padding of the "love element." That he and Rose should finally succumb to their affinity is as obvious as is the triumph of his genius. It is true that, incidentally, some unexpected events transpire in the narrative, but they are no more necessary to the story than would be the sudden exposure of the other side of the moon. On the whole, we are inclined to think it a pity that the first paroxysm of *zal* did not take Ladislav back to Poland.



"Vrouw Grobelaar and Her Leading Cases," by Perceval Gibbon, McClure, Phillips Company, is a book of short stories, or, rather, a series of anecdotes told by an old Boer woman to members of her household. They are tales such as one would expect of Dutch life in South Africa—coarse, grim, and brutal in many respects, relieved only by the sort of humor that may be extracted from the character of a strenuous, masterful, and withal whimsical old woman, who has preserved with age the inconsistencies of an essentially feminine temperament.

A long life spent upon the veldt, in constant conflict not merely with wild men and wild beasts, but with nature and the insistent English, brought to her a fund of experiences well worth hearing about. That she is a good story-teller, with a keen sense of dra-

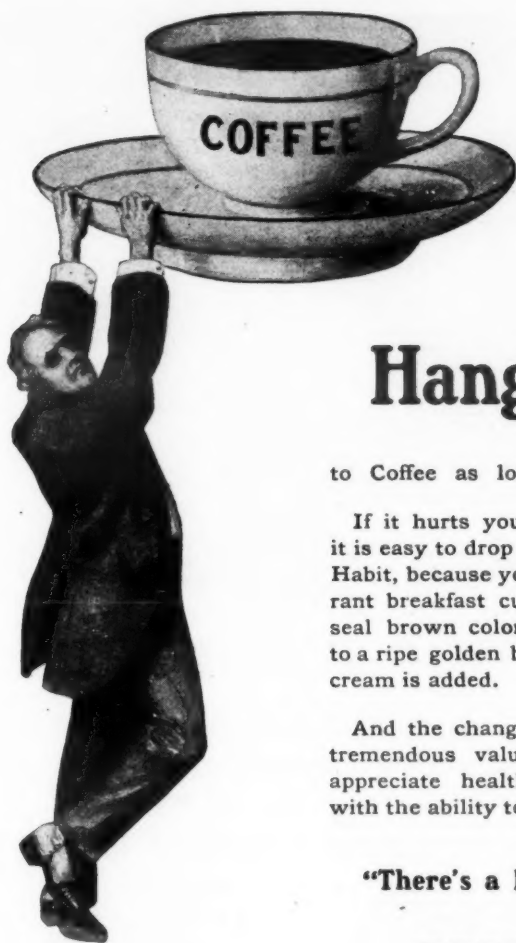
matic effects, must be admitted, however distasteful the fastidious may find such narratives as "The Avenger of the Blood," "Morder Drift," or "Vasco's Sweetheart."

Human nature, resolved into its elements, so far as this is possible in the twentieth century, is the burden of "Vrouw Grobelaar." Decidedly the stories are what would be called "strong."



The Twenty-five Best Selling Books of the Month.

- "The House of Mirth," Edith Wharton, Chas. Scribner's Sons.
- "The House of a Thousand Candles," Meredith Nicholson, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "The Wheel of Life," Ellen Glasgow, Doubleday, Page & Co.
- "The Conquest of Canaan," Booth Tarkington, Harper & Bros.
- "Nedra," George Barr McCutcheon, Dodd, Mead & Co.
- "The Reckoning," Robert W. Chambers, D. Appleton & Co.
- "Mr. Scraggs," Henry Wallace Phillips, The Grafton Press.
- "Double Trouble," Herbert Quick, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "The Arncliffe Puzzle," Gordon Holmes, E. J. Clode.
- "In Old Bellaire," Mary Dillon, Century Co.
- "On the Field of Glory," Henryk Sienkiewicz, Little, Brown & Co.
- "Karl Grier," Louis Tracy, E. J. Clode.
- "The Sage Brush Parson," A. B. Ward, Little, Brown & Co.
- "The Weight of the Crown," Fred M. White, R. F. Fenno & Co.
- "Frenzied Finance," Thomas W. Lawson, The Ridgway-Thayer Co.
- "The Long Arm," Samuel M. Gardenhire, Harper & Bros.
- "A Maker of History," E. Phillips Oppenheim, Little, Brown & Co.
- "The Gambler," Katherine C. Thurston, Harper & Bros.
- "Number 101," Wymond Carey, G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- "Napoleon's Love Story," W. Gasiordski, E. P. Dutton & Co.
- "Barbara Winslow, Rebel," Elizabeth Ellis, Dodd, Mead & Co.
- "The Passenger From Calais," Arthur Griffiths, L. C. Page & Co.
- "The Kentuckian," James Naylor, C. M. Clark Co.
- "A Lost Cause," Guy Thorne, G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- "Rebecca Mary," Annie Hamilton Donnell, Harper & Bros.



Hang On

to Coffee as long as you can.

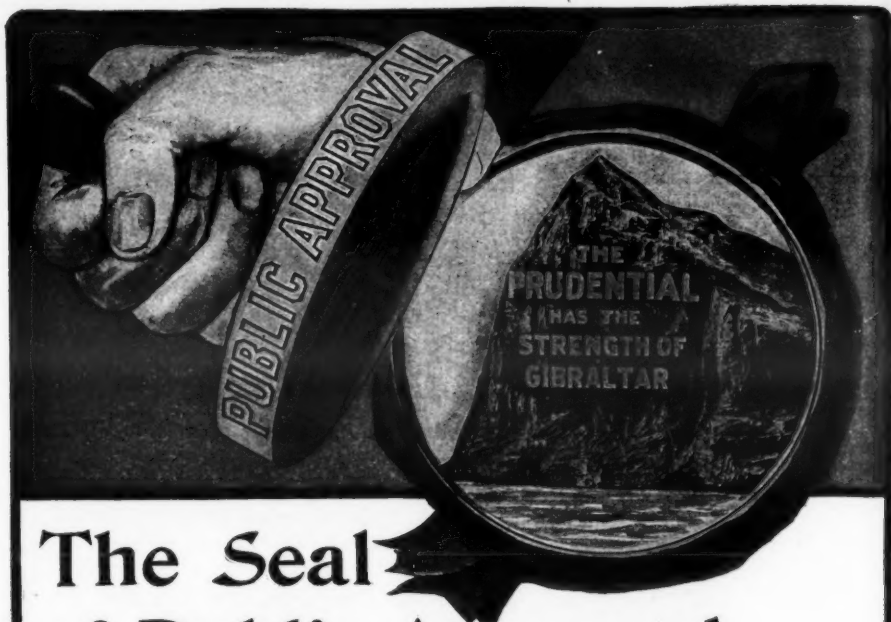
If it hurts you **VERY HARD** it is easy to drop into the Postum Habit, because you have the fragrant breakfast cup with the rich seal brown color which changes to a ripe golden brown when rich cream is added.

And the change in feeling is of tremendous value to those who appreciate health and strength with the ability to "do things."

"There's a Reason" for

POSTUM

Postum Cereal Co., Battle Creek, Mich., U. S. A.



The Seal of Public Approval

The Great American Public has expressed its Confidence in The Prudential again, and in the Practical American Way, not by words, but by deeds.

The Increase in Insurance in Force
in 1905 was over
One Hundred and Thirteen Million Dollars

Suppose you Inquire for a Policy Suitable to Yourself. You May be Surprised How Little It Will Cost. Write Your Name and Address on the Margin of this Advertisement and Send for a Plan of Home Protection and Saving that will interest you.

Write Now, While You Think of It. Dept. 90

The Prudential

INSURANCE COMPANY OF AMERICA

Incorporated as a Stock Company by the State of New Jersey

JOHN F. DRYDEN, Prest.

HOME OFFICE, Newark, N. J.

It is Easy

To brand a beer "pure," but actual purity means to double the cost of the brewing. That is how we attain it.

Schlitz beer is brewed in absolute cleanliness, and cooled in filtered air. Then it is aged for months to avoid causing biliousness, then filtered through white wood pulp. Then every bottle is sterilized.

That is why Schlitz is unique for its purity.

Schlitz

*Ask for the Brewery Bottling.
See that the cork or crown
is branded Schlitz.*

The Beer That Made Milwaukee Famous.



AM
John Mackintosh...
the Toffee King
AN OLD ENGLISH CANDY

**They
get
up in
the
night
to
eat**

MACKINTOSH'S TOFFEE

An Old English Candy

"MORE-ISH" The more you eat

— more you want

PURE AND DELICIOUS

5 AND 10 CENTS A PACKAGE

JOHN MACKINTOSH - 78 HUDSON ST. NEW YORK

DEPT. 12

DIAMONDS



ON CREDIT FOR EASTER GIFTS

CUPID IS OUR BEST AGENT. HE FINDS PLACES FOR DIAMOND RINGS EVERY DAY. HE WORKS AMONG ALL CLASSES, FROM THE MODEST CLERK TO THE WEALTHY EMPLOYER, AND WE FILL HIS ORDERS, OPENING A CONFIDENTIAL CHARGE ACCOUNT WITH EACH OF HIS CLIENTS. THE GOODS ARE DELIVERED AT ONCE, WE ASK

No Security, No Endorsements, No Interest

We open hundreds of confidential charge accounts every business day for **Diamond Rings, Pins, Brooches, Lockets, etc., and High Grade Ladies' and Gents' Watches,**

and the larger percentage of these accounts are with persons who had always considered **Genuine Diamonds** a luxury until they read our little booklet: "HOW EASILY YOU CAN WEAR AND OWN A DIAMOND." It answers every question, and tells how every honest person, no matter where they live, can select any article they desire from our **Million Dollar Stock.** Have it sent to them on approval subject to examination, paying only one-fifth the cost on delivery and the balance in eight equal monthly payments. **Write for a copy today. Mailed Free.**

BUYING A DIAMOND IS NOT AN EXTRAVAGANCE

It is a wise investment in the most valuable, stable and quickest cash producing gem in the world. Diamonds have increased in value more than twenty per cent in the past twelve months, and the best of European authorities predict an even greater increase during the coming year.

Our Prices Are From 10 to 15 Per Cent Lower than the ordinary spot cash retail jeweler. This is made possible by the fact that we are direct importers and sell a thousand Diamonds where the retail jeweler sells but one.

Our Handsome New Catalog a copy of which will be mailed to you with booklet mentioned above, contains 63 pages and 1,000 illustrations of all that is new and up-to-date in artistic jewelry. It affords you the pleasure of selecting in the privacy of your own home such articles of jewelry as you may desire for yourself or your loved ones. **Write for a copy today.**

Our Guarantee, aside from the fact that we are one of the oldest (est. 1858) and the **Largest Jewelry House in the U. S.,** we give a signed guarantee as to quality and value with every Diamond sold. You can exchange any Diamond bought of us at any time for other jewelry or a larger stone.

LOFTIS
BROS & CO. 1858

**DIAMOND CUTTERS
WATCHMAKERS - JEWELERS**
Department D 29 92 to 96 State Street
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U. S. A.





O'Sullivan's

Heels of New Rubber

What is it that you aspire to in life?

Health is the first consideration. Rubber heels procure more health to the square inch than anything in evidence. That's a fact! — my teacher told me so, and he told me to teach it to my friends.

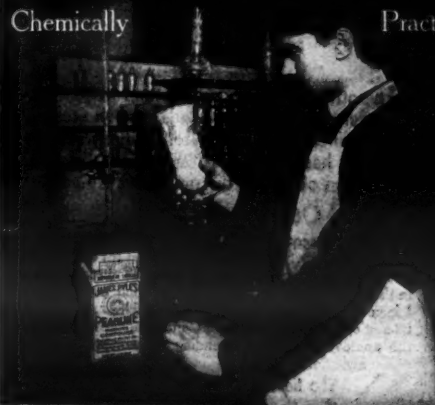
I dislike to admit that rubber heels are a benefit, but I have to. Come down to business and be honest with yourself, — rubber on your heels is the correct thing. Be sure and secure O'Sullivan's: they are the only heels of New Rubber. Remember the name when ordering — don't cost you any more. Any dealer or the makers,

O'SULLIVAN RUBBER CO., Lowell, Mass.

Best by Test

Chemically

Practically



TEST
Pearline

AS YOU WILL

You'll find it a PURE—
SAFE—EASY—QUICK—
LABOR and CLOTHES
SAVING Soap Powder
—better than Bar Soap
in every respect—the most
Up-to-Date Soap Powder—
and Powdered Soap is the
sort to use.

EVERY ATOM OF

Pearline tests **100 %**

SERVICE
QUALITY
EFFICIENCY



Pabst Extract

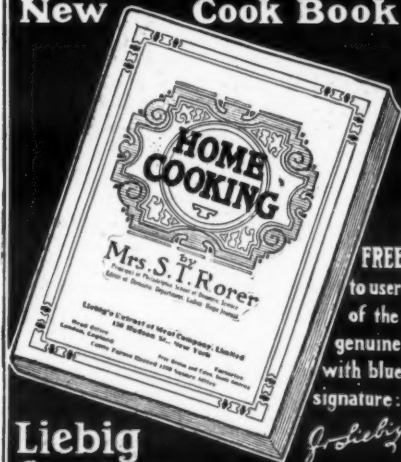
The "Best" Tonic

When you are nervous, sleepless or fagged out, try a small glass of Pabst Extract, morning, noon and night. It will aid your digestion, steady your nerves, bring you refreshing sleep and build you up physically.

25 Cents at all druggists.
Insist upon the original.

Pabst Extract Department, Milwaukee, Wis.

LIEBIG COMPANY'S
New **Cook Book**



FREE
to users
of the
genuine,
with blue
signature:

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Company's Extract of Beef

Send postal asking for New Cook Book to
Lieber's Extract of Meat Co., Ltd.,
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AUTOCRAT



THE STATIONERY OF QUALITY

¶ The attractive package in which **AUTOCRAT** Stationery reaches your hands is but a preliminary verification of that rare, distinctive quality which has made **AUTOCRAT** Paper the desk companion of clever, discriminating women.

Our Special Offer

¶ To quickly acquaint you with the exceptional qualities of **AUTOCRAT** Stationery, we will send for ten cents, in stamps or silver, a liberal assortment of these papers in their varying sizes and tints—including our newest Linen Velour—with envelopes to match. Also our interesting booklet "Polite Correspondence," giving the approved forms of extending and accepting social invitations.

The best dealers sell **AUTOCRAT** Stationery

If you have any difficulty in obtaining it, send us your dealer's name, and we will see that you are supplied.

WHITE & WYCKOFF MFG. CO.
75 Water Street - - Holyoke, Mass.



A - \$20 WATCH FOR \$5.45

These figures tell exactly what we are doing—selling a \$20.00 watch for \$5.45



We don't claim that this is a \$40.00 watch or a \$50.00 watch, but it is a **\$20.00 watch**. A leading watch manufacturer, being hard pressed for ready cash, recently sold us 100,000 watches—watches actually built to retail at \$20.00. There is no doubt that we could wholesale them to dealers for \$12.00 or \$13.00, but this would involve a great amount of labor, time and expense. In the end our profit would be little more than it is at selling the watch direct to the consumer at **\$5.45**. The **Evington Watch**, which we offer at **\$5.45** is an im-**21** jeweled, finely balanced and perfectly adjusted movement. It has specially selected jewels, dust band, patent regulator, enameled dial, jeweled compensation balance, **double hunting case, genuine gold laid** and handsomely engraved. Each watch is thoroughly timed, tested and regulated, before leaving the factory, and both the case, and movement are **guaranteed for 25 years**.

Clip out this advertisement and mail it to us to-day with your name, postoffice address and nearest express office. Tell us whether you want a lady's or gent's watch and we will send the watch to your express office at once. If it **satisfies** you, after a careful examination, pay the express agent **\$5.45** and express charges and the watch is yours, but if it doesn't please you return it to us **at our expense**.

A **25-Year Guarantee** will be placed in the front case of the watch we send you, and to the first 10,000 customers we will send a beautiful gold-laid watch chain, Free. We refer to the First National Bank of Chicago, Capital \$10,000,000. **National Consolidated Watch Co., Dept. 330, Chicago**

6-12-26

Clerks

Just means that clerks who want to use the best pencils for their particular work will find them indexed by name and number on pages 6, 12 and 26 of Dixon's Pencil Guide.

Other pages for every person and every use.

a 32-page book, indexed by vocations, correctly indicating the right pencil for every kind of use. Sent free if you ask for it on a postal.

Department A Z,
JOSEPH DIXON CRUCIBLE CO.,
Jersey City, N. J.

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

The pen with  the Clip-Cap

In Coat



Holds pen firmly in coat pocket, inside or outside.

In Vest



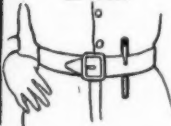
Holds the pen rigidly and securely—never drops out.

On Blouse or Shirt



Can be clipped on the front of shirt, blouse or waist.

In Belt



Can be held right side up even on the belt, as shown.

No Danger

of loss with the Ideal Clip-Cap attached to your fountain pen.

Riding or Driving, Steaming or Sailing, Hunting or Fishing, Working or Playing, Indoors or Out this little thing means that your pen is always at hand.

You can carry it safely in any pocket—even if you haven't got a pocket you can hang it on your shirt or belt.



Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

is made in many different sizes with all grades of pen points, at varying prices from \$2.50 upward. It is the "Standard of the World" because it feeds easily and constantly and never sputters, spills or balks.

All reputable dealers carry them—others carry imitations.

Our booklet will educate you on many different grades your dealer can procure.

Ask for "Points for Penmen, Edition A."

L. E. Waterman Company,
173 Broadway, New York

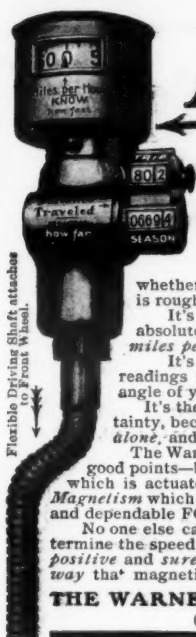
209 State St., Chicago

136 St. James St., Montreal

8 School St., Boston

18 Geary St., San Francisco

Absolutely Accurate At ALL SPEEDS



An accurate speed and distance indicator is quite as necessary on your *Auto-mobile* as a watch is in your *pocket*.

Furthermore, it must be *absolutely dependable* under all conditions of heat, cold or position. Otherwise a speed indicator is not worth the space it occupies. Isn't that so? You can always depend on the

WARNER AUTO-METER

whether you go slow or fast, whether the road is rough or smooth, hilly or flat.

It's the only indicator which is *always* absolutely infallible at *speeds under ten miles per hour*.

It's the only indicator which gives correct readings in *any position*, no matter what the angle of your car.

It's the only indicator you can *read* with certainty, because the dial changes with the *speed alone*, and is uninfluenced by the jar of the car.

The Warner Auto-Meter has all these *exclusive* good points—because it is the *only* speed indicator which is actuated by the same *fixed, unchangeable Magnetism* which makes the Mariner's Compass reliable and dependable **FOREVER** under all conditions.

No one else can successfully use magnetism to determine the speed of an automobile, though it's the *only positive and sure way*, because there is *only just one way* that magnetism can successfully be used for this

purpose, and *we have patented that way*.

The Warner Auto-Meter will last a lifetime. It's as sensitive as a compass and as *solid as a rock*. It will withstand any shock that your car will stand without the *slightest injury* and without affecting its *accuracy* in the slightest degree. That's why we can sell the Auto-Meter on a

Ten Years Guarantee

and will gladly renew any Auto-Meter (which has not been injured by accident) if the Magnet (the HEART of the instrument) is more than 1-10 of 1% incorrect after 10 years use.

We will gladly tell you more about this wonderful instrument if you will write us, and at the same time will send you something every motorist will prize—our

Free Book, "Auto Pointers."

Write for particulars **TODAY**—don't put it off.

THE WARNER INSTRUMENT CO., 213 Roosevelt Street, BELOIT, WIS.

(The Auto-Meter is on sale by all first-class dealers and at most Garages.)

ST. LOUIS

"Rigs That Run"

TYPE XVI

32-36 ACTUAL H.P.

Touring Car, Price \$2500.

THE crowning triumph of fifteen years' experience in building gasoline automobiles. A car that embodies all the latest practical improvements and several superior individual features. It is the dependable car of the season—easy to operate, economical to maintain, noiseless, powerful, and fast. Investigate the St. Louis carefully before purchasing your car. It will pay you.

MOTOR—Four cylinder vertical, under hood, water cooled. Develops 32-36 Actual H. P.

TRANSMISSION—Sliding type, three speeds forward and reverse. All shifts made with one lever.

CONTROL—New style rack and pinion with ball and socket joints. Spark and throttle control placed conveniently under steering gear. **DRIVE**—Bevel gear. **BRAKES**—Three, will hold car at any grade. Two controlled by feet, one by lever at side of car. **WHEEL BASE**—110 inches.

SPEED—4 to 50 miles per hour on high gear. **FRAME**—Pressed Steel.

Carries five passengers comfortably, beautifully finished, luxuriously upholstered. Fully equipped, \$2,500.

Our type XV St. Louis Touring Car is 4 cylinder, water cooled, 30-40 Actual H.P.; 104 inch wheel base. Is a beauty. Price, \$2,200.

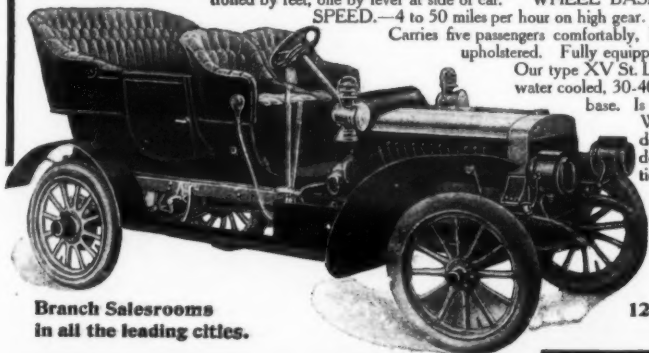
Write to-day for new illustrated descriptive catalog giving full details of both types and mention edition C.

St. Louis Motor Car Co.

PEORIA - ILL.

General Sales Office:

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CHICAGO, ILL.



**Branch Salesrooms
in all the leading cities.**

STUDEBAKER

Automobiles for 1906



Model F Touring Car, 28-32 H. P. Price \$3,000

NOW that the great automobile shows of New York and Chicago are at an end, thousands of prospective buyers are debating the salient points of one car as compared with another; doubtless wondering in greatest perplexity why each enthusiastic salesman insists upon the fact that his car is the best.

Permit us to suggest that in regard to extreme accuracy and scientific painstaking in both design and construction there is little or no material difference between the products of several of the more reputable and substantial builders. The buying public has but one great, important consideration to fall back upon—**reputation**. The first and last essential in automobile buying is the **reputation** of the manufacturer back of the machine.

We believe the Studebaker equal to any car offered. We know that its design is up to date and that its construction is thorough. We offer the most liberal guarantee based upon this knowledge.

Catalogue and detailed information direct or through our nearest agency will be furnished with pleasure upon inquiry.

Studebaker Automobile Company

SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

Members Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers

BRANCH AGENCIES in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, Dallas, Salt Lake City, Portland, Ore., San Francisco, and many other places.

Extraordinary Reduction in Rates for Pacific Coast Tours

For the season beginning June 1 and ending September 15, 1906, Pacific Coast and Northwest tourists will have the lowest all-summer rates ever offered to these sections.

To Los Angeles with choice of direct routes, round-trip rates will be: From Chicago, **\$75.00**; from St. Louis, **\$69.00**; from other points, proportionately low. For tour in one direction via Puget Sound and Portland, rates will be: From Chicago, **\$88.50**; from St. Louis, **\$82.50**; from other points proportionately low.

During special periods even lower rates will be available. The usual low rates will also be in effect for trips to Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, the Black Hills and Yellowstone Park.

To Seattle with choice of direct routes, round-trip rates will be: From Chicago, **\$75.00**; from St. Louis, **\$69.00**; from other points, proportionately low. For tour in one direction via California, rates will be: From Chicago, **\$88.50**; from St. Louis, **\$82.50**; from other points proportionately low.

Rates to Spokane, Wash., will be \$5.00 less than those quoted above. Rates to Helena, Butte and Anaconda, Mont., will be \$10.00 less than those above.

The Pacific Coast Tours of the Burlington Route are of the highest standard. They have been developed and elaborated year by year since 1882, with the result that they are to-day unsurpassed.

It will be a pleasure to help plan your tour. Our handsome new booklet, "Pacific Coast Tours," will answer nearly all your questions and the others will receive personal attention. The use of this booklet will save you the trouble of getting and combining the separate ones of the many different roads.

An expenditure of a penny and a minute will secure a copy of "Pacific Coast Tours." Just write these words above your name and address on a postal and send it to



P. S. EUSTIS
276"Q" Building, Chicago



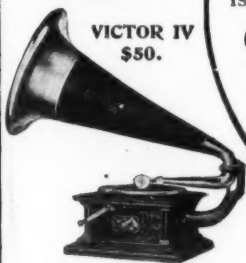
VICTOR I
\$22.



VICTOR II
\$30.



VICTOR III
\$40.



VICTOR IV
\$50.



VICTOR V
\$60.



VICTOR VI
\$100.



VICTOR

The throat of Caruso is a magnificently powerful and sensitive machine and the artist's soul on fire sends through this machine the pulsations which we know as Caruso's voice.

The Victor is another throat, strong, sensitive and true, and it brings to you—wherever you are—those same pulsations of sound that people enjoy in Grand Opera at New York, or in hearing Sousa's or Pryor's Band, and the light and bright music that is such a relief in this tired over-strained age.

Obtainable by Easy Payments through Victor dealers

Here are the six principal styles of the Victor with their prices. Most any Victor dealer will be glad to make it easy for you to buy Victor Machines and Records by your paying a small sum down and a small sum per month—you pay as you enjoy. After a while the payment stops; but the enjoyment is endless.

To secure further information in regard to full details of the different style Victors and buying on the instalment plan, fill out, cut out and mail us today the coupon at the top of this page.

Victor Talking Machine Co
Camden N J

Berliner Gramophone Co. of Montreal,
Canadian Distributors

Victor Talking Machine Co
Camden N J

Please send me your catalogue
and instalment information,
and tell me where I can hear
the Victor played.

Name _____

Street _____

Town _____

State _____

Y

Fill out, cut out and mail today

Another Dividend

WONDERFUL PROGRESS MADE

Large Dividends Being Earned and Paid—Semi-Annual 4 Per Cent. Payable April 1st, 1906.

The plantation in Mexico owned by this Company is nearly half the size of Rhode Island, and if cut into a strip of land a mile wide, it would be 450 miles long or farther than from New York to Pittsburgh. Or, if cut into a strip a quarter of a mile wide, it would reach from the home office of the Company in Philadelphia to the plantation.

We have over ten million (\$10,000,000) dollars' worth (at New York prices) of mahogany, logwood and other valuable cabinet and dye woods now standing on our land—trees that have been growing hundreds of years; five million young henequen plants, one million rubber trees, besides orange, lemon and grape fruit trees will be developed.

Nearly two thousand head of cattle are on the land; we have enough good pasture for ten thousand. Stores, sawmill, wood-turning plant and factory operating. Nearly one thousand laborers employed. Development work progressing rapidly. Large returns assured.

Entire property with all improvements—more than 200 buildings, railroad line, etc.—paid for in full and deeded in trust for stockholders' protection to a Philadelphia trust company.

8% GUARANTEED—10% PAID

Eight per cent. dividends, payable semi-annually guaranteed. Ten per cent. paid

last year; ten per cent. or more this year. Next semi-annual dividend of four per cent. derived from sale of mahogany, payable April 1, 1906.

NOW IS THE TIME TO INVEST.

Do you want an interest in this enterprise? Limited number of shares offered at par, \$300, on instalments of \$5 monthly per share. *Each share represents 14 acres* of the property. Price of shares to be advanced soon.

Over 3000 shareholders now, whose holdings range from one to 300 shares each.

To thoroughly understand this proposition—its great value as a permanent and safe investment and the prospects for large and increasing dividends, we want you to read our illustrated booklet and paper—both sent free to any address.

To secure 4 per cent. on your money April 1st write at once, as only a limited number of shares will be sold that will receive the benefit of accumulated April dividend. *Write to-day—a postal will do.*

Officers

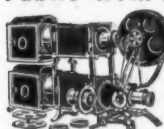
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Vice-Pres. COLONEL A. K. McILROY, Ex-Soldier Times, Philadelphia, Pa.
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Write
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Catalog
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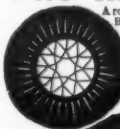
Motion Pictures

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY as our instruction Book and "Business Guide" sell all. We furnish Complete Outfits with Big Advertising Posters, etc. Humorous dramas brimful of fun, travel, history, religion, temperance work and songs illustrated. One man can do it. Astonishing Opportunity in any locality for a man with a little money to show in churches, school houses, lodge halls, theatres, etc. Profits \$10 to over \$100 per night. Others do it, why not you? It's easy to write to us and we'll tell you how. Catalogue free.

Motisinger Auto-Sparker

starts and runs
Gas Engines without Batteries.
No other machine can do it successfully for lack of original patents owned by us. No twist motion in our drive. No belt or switch necessary. No batteries whatever, for make and break or jump-spark. Water and dust-proof. Fully guaranteed.
MOTISINGER DEVICE MFG. CO.,
94 Main Street, Pendleton, Ind., U.S.A.

The Meteoric Diamond



A recently discovered GEM OF SURPASSING BEAUTY, BRILLIANCY AND ENDURANCE. Not offered as an imitation but as a SUBSTITUTE for the real diamond. SOLID GOLD mountings only, latest designs. We have no agents. Price within reach of all. Let us tell you all about it in our FREE DESCRIPTIVE BOOKLET.

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Made for
Men,
Women
and
Children



Radium Shoulder Brace

Makes your shoulders square and your lungs strong. We guarantee it will correct stooping shoulders, promote deep breathing, make your lungs strong, assure good health. Not a harness, weighs only seven ounces. Physicians recommend it. At dealers or sent by mail, prepaid, sixteen \$1.00, silk \$1.50, white or gray. In ordering give chest measure around body under arms—send to-day for free book. **ILLINOIS SUSPENDER CO., Dept. 6, 161 Market St., Chicago, Ill.**

AINSLEE'S is a bright, enterprising magazine. It always has a very full and varied table of contents, and provides a collection of absorbing tales.—*Boston Herald.*
When writing to advertisers please mention Ainslee's

THERE IS MONEY FOR YOU

In the Advertising Business. Be an Ad. Writer and Earn \$25, \$50 or \$100 per Week. If You are Anxious to Increase Your Income, We Have Something of Importance to Say to You.

If you had a GOOD chance to win a hundred thousand dollars by spending twenty-five dollars, you would spend the twenty-five, wouldn't you?

If you had a GOOD chance to add \$100,000 to your income during the remaining active years of your life, by paying \$25 (cash or monthly installments) for certain knowledge, wouldn't it pay you to take that chance?

Certainly it would—and that's just the kind of a chance we have to offer you.

In the first case, you would simply be "taking a gamble." In the second case you would have almost absolute control of the situation. In accepting the offer we make you, you are taking chances only on yourself.

If you are ambitious, energetic and willing to take up the subject of advertisement writing **ENTHUSIASTICALLY**, you are almost sure to succeed. The advertising profession offers every inducement to the person who is striving for success. The work is high-grade, dignified and fascinating; the salaries paid are exceptionally good; and the chances for securing really **IMPORTANT** positions are probably better than in any other profession or line of work.

A knowledge of advertising is essential to the modern business education. Without such knowledge, a man is likely to become a commercial derelict in these days of keen competition.

"When a man is resigned to his Fate, the resignation is generally accepted!" Don't be content to drift along on a small salary with little or no chance of advancement. Keep up with the profession. Investigate the all-important subject of advertising. It will open your eyes to the opportunities before you. In fact, it will show you how to **CREATE** opportunities.

Send for Our Free Book

We want to send you a copy of our new book "How and Where to Learn Advertising." It tells all about the advertising profession and why the salaries paid are better than those paid in other lines of work. It gives a lot of information that will interest you.

It also tells why our course is considered by those who have taken it, as the most practical, thorough and interesting course that has ever been compiled. We teach the subject by correspondence, and if you can devote two or three evenings a week to the work, you should be able to complete the course in several months.

In order to get more people acquainted with the merits of the course, we are making a special limited time offer, particulars of which we shall be glad to send you by return mail, if you will simply send us a postal card saying "Send me your book on advertising and special rate offer."

Don't forget — we have something of importance to say to you—Send your postal card to-day.

**The American Commercial School,
2219 Land Title Building, Philadelphia.**





The Wage Earners' Declaration of Independence

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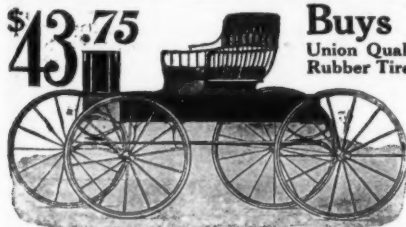
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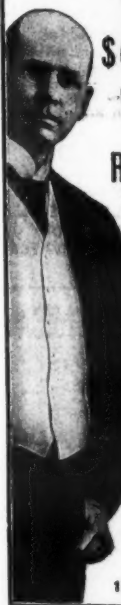
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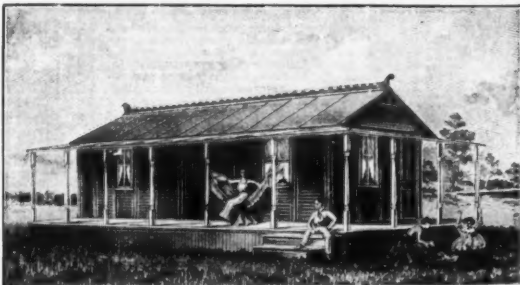
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A new and marvelous discovery—a real hair restorative—one that nourishes the roots and restores the hair to its original beauty, luxuriance and color. You water a plant and it grows—taking on the color that nature intends. It's the same with the hair—and just as easy, now that we have made this discovery. Better than any argument is the Restorative itself—for you to try. We are only too glad to throw ourselves wholly on the merits of Golden Rule Hair Restorative, so we have set aside thousands of dollars to be spent in big free sample bottles. If we didn't know what our preparation would do, this would be reckless extravagance. But we do know and believe the quickest way to help you find it out is to place a bottle of it in your hands.

We know the annoyance of having one's hair fall and turn gray, perhaps while you are still young. It is the result of some unusual worry or care, but that does not prevent friends and neighbors from the knowing nod that says "Growing old."

Not so, it is only a run down condition of the roots of the hair—just as the body gets run down. But you should not permit this. It is not necessary and this needless look of age impairs your usefulness and popularity, in society or business.

Golden Rule Hair Restorative simply nourishes the roots, waking them up—toning them up—rejuvenating them until they are rendered just as lively and vigorous as when you were a child. The natural result is, that the hair grows and thus growing from healthy root coils it comes with all the beauty of color and gloss that it possessed when you were young. That's the whole story in a nutshell. But there is only one way to accomplish this—by feeding the cells of the hair with the food elements they lack. Dyeing the hair is absurd and pure stimulation is a wrong principle. It is food and food alone that will restore hair to its youthful vigor. Hair can starve and wither like any plant that gets its life from its roots.

We have simply discovered the combination sought by chemists for a thousand years. All others are crude attempts,—you can buy a thousand dyes and stimulants. We don't ask you to believe, we ask you to prove it yourself by using a bottle free. Everyone should use Golden Rule Hair Restorative as a dressing for the hair, to keep it healthy, just as you use a dentifrice to keep your teeth dainty and healthy. Try the luxury of it. Send free

Remember, it stops hair from falling, cures and prevents dandruff, makes the hair grow, even if it has fallen out badly, and, best of all, actually restores the hair to its original, youthful color, gloss and beauty. You can't get a sample of Golden Rule Hair Restorative.

We guarantee it to be harmless and do what we claim for it. Enclose 10c to pay postage.

When you have tried it and seen your gray hair restored, streaked and faded hair made beautifully even in color, falling hair stopped, in short your hair made what you so much wish it to be—then you will be as enthusiastic as we are. Fill out the coupon—mail it to us to-day—and the bottle will come by the first mail—in a plain wrapper—with full explanations. If your druggist will not supply you, we will.

The Citizens' Wholesale Supply Co.

Reg. Sizes—25c, 50c, \$1.00 Dept. T. COLUMBUS, OHIO

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The American Portable Vibrator For Home Use



Weight 2½ lbs.

Is endorsed by the most celebrated physicians. It prevents wrinkles and blackheads and permanently beautifies and preserves the complexion. Its use will increase the circulation of the scalp; loosen the skin and expel the dandruff, which absorbs the oil needed to nourish the hair. Its application develops the muscles and tissues of the neck and arms and for people accustomed to massage, the American Vibrator is indispensable. It weighs but 2½ pounds and can be attached to any electric light socket and be conveniently used by any member of the family.

The American Vibrator is sold on an absolute guarantee, on easy terms, at a price within reach of all. We will ship you a Vibrator on trial and will not ask you to pay us one cent until you have convinced yourself of its wonderful merits. For full particulars of our plan, write at once for our Special Booklet No. 105 to

AMERICAN VIBRATOR CO.,
Chemical Building, St. Louis.



A True HAIR Grower

Are you bald?
Are you losing hair?
Does your scalp itch?
Does dandruff trouble you?

I CAN GIVE YOU RELIEF.

I am an Englishman. I was bald at an early age, and after using every liquid "tonic" on the market, in desperation tried the formula a noted Swiss savant gave me while travelling in his native land.

In Forty Days My Hair Grew Out Again

heavy and strong. Many of my friends obtained the same astonishing results. I then secured the savant's permission to sell the preparation, and have had less than one per cent of failures in nearly 700,000 cases treated in the past five years. It is equally successful for young and old of both sexes.

I AM A BUSINESS MAN, And frankly state that I am not conducting a charitable enterprise. I know what my preparation will do, and will give you a trial box free to let you prove it for yourself. When satisfied, I will send you more of it by mail at a moderate price.

FREE TO YOU. If unable to call at my office, I will send you a box by mail (in plain wrapper) absolutely free if you will send your name and address, plainly written in letter or postal, AT ONCE, as my supply of samples is limited. Address exactly as follows:

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Sample Desk No. 30.

No. 150 Nassau st. (Am. Tract Soc. Bldg.),
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Spinal Curvature can be corrected without pain, discomfort or inconvenience by our Scientific Spinal Appliance, which is cheaper in price, lighter in weight, easier to wear, and better in every way than any support ever used. It combines the good points of the old style braces, but eliminates the objectionable features. The Appliance is made to individual measurements to meet the requirements of each patient and is guaranteed to fit perfectly.

We Allow 30 Days' Trial.

Our catalogue giving full information and book, "Letters in Evidence," containing nearly 300 testimonials from patients in all parts of the world will be gladly sent.

PHILO BURT MFG. CO., 221 16th St., Jamestown, N. Y.

THE Keeley Cure

For Liquor and Drug Using

A scientific remedy which has been skillfully and successfully administered by medical specialists for the past 25 years

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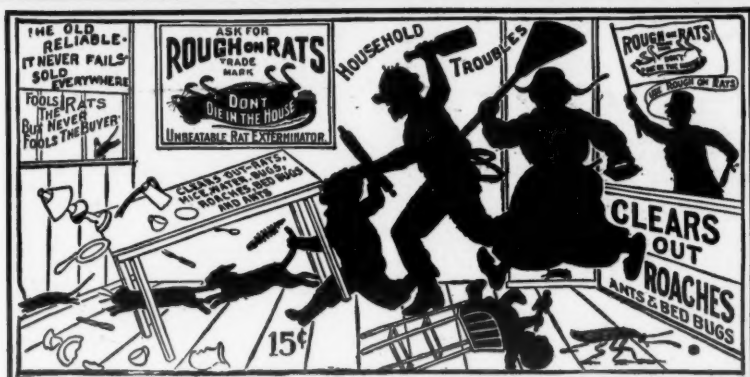
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A large lithograph, 14x21, in seven colors, of the above Rough on Rats illustration (Household Troubles), which has convulsed the world with laughter, with comic descriptive verses, mailed free.

Unbeatable Rat Exterminator

Equally Effective against Mice, Roaches, Ants and Bed Bugs. Rats and Mice instinctively avoid the familiar forms of ready prepared for use doses; Rough on Rats, the original and old reliable being unmixt and all poison, can be disguised in many ways, thus completely outwitting them. Though a poison and originally designed for Rats and Mice, experience has demonstrated it the most effective of all exterminators of Roaches, Ants and Bed Bugs. The only thing at all effective against the large Black Cockroach or Beetle. Fools the Rats, Mice and Bugs, but never disappoints or fools the buyer. Safely used 30 years. We also make Rough on Fleas (powder), for dogs, etc., 25c.

Rough on Roaches (non-poisonous), 15c., 25c. Rough on Bed Bugs (liquid), nozzle cans, 15c., 25c.
 Rough on Corns (liquid) 25c.; (salve) 10c. Rough on Corns (plasters) 8 for 10c.
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E. S. WELLS, Chemist

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SUN FLOWER FLESH FOOD



REMOVES WRINKLES from the face and hands, no matter how deep the furrows. It is not a face powder, cream, cosmetic or bleach, contains no lead or other injurious ingredients; absolutely harmless, leaves the skin soft as velvet; will not grow hair; it is a natural beauty maker and will permanently remove all skin imperfections. Sample box for 2c postage. Prof. J. H. AUSTIN, 660 McVicker's Theatre Building, Chicago.

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Contains the following in one volume—

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Medical Knowledge a Husband and Wife Should Have.

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WILL MAKE YOUR TEETH
PEARLY WHITE AND SOUND

Removes Tartar, Preserves the Gums

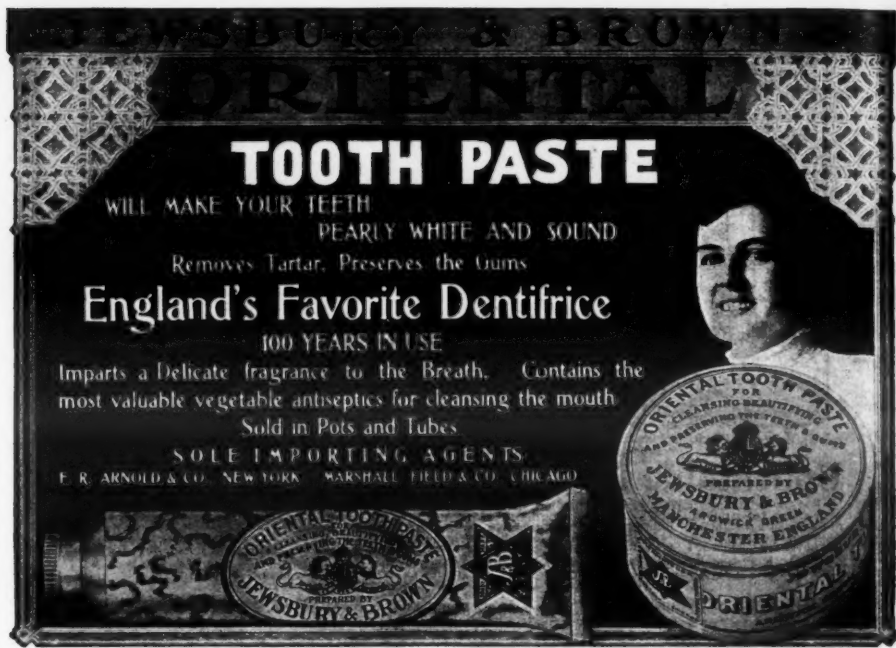
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100 YEARS IN USE

Imparts a Delicate fragrance to the Breath. Contains the most valuable vegetable antiseptics for cleansing the mouth

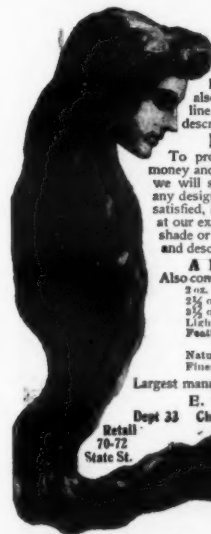
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The advertisement for Oriental Tooth Paste features a woman's portrait on the right and a product tin on the left. The tin is labeled 'ORIENTAL TOOTH PASTE FOR CLEANSING BEAUTIFYING AND PRESERVING THE TEETH & GUMS PREPARED BY JEWELRY & BROWN LONDON ENGLAND'. The background has a decorative lattice pattern.

BOOK ON Hair Beautifying FREE



We will send to any address our interesting and instructive book, telling all about correct care of the hair, proper styles for dressing, and how to become beautiful. This book also describes upwards of 500 complete line of switches and hair goods of every description and tells how we send

HAIR ON APPROVAL

To prove to you that we can save you money and give you the best live French hair, we will send you on ten days consignment any design you may want for comparison. If satisfied, keep the goods, if not, return them at our expense. We guarantee to match any shade or quality. Send sample of your hair and describe what you want.

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Also complete line of hair goods at like prices.

2 oz. 28 in. switch.....	\$1.25
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Backache**

Neuralgia.
Sciatica.
Rheumatism
and Lumbago use

**Sloan's
Liniment**

PRICE 25¢-50 and \$1.00
Sold by all Druggists and Dealers

*Dr. Earl S. Sloan,
Boston, Mass. U.S.A.*



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(Established 1879.)

"Cures While You Sleep."

**Whooping-Cough, Croup,
Bronchitis, Coughs,
Diphtheria, Catarrh.**

Confidence can be placed in a remedy which for a quarter of a century has earned unqualified praise. Restful nights are assured at once.

Cresolene is a Boon to Asthmatics.

ALL DRUGGISTS.

Send Postal for Descriptive Booklet.

Cresolene Antiseptic Throat Tablets for the irritated throat, at your druggist or from us, 10c. in stamps.

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ESTABLISHED 1875.

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Sanatorium at Lebanon, Ohio. Fine location. Large grounds. Easily reached by train and electric cars from Cincinnati. 30,000 cases cured. No restraint. Rates reasonable. Cure guaranteed.

HOME TREATMENT. If it is not convenient to take treatment at the Sanatorium, write us for our Home Remedy that has cured thousands who could not come and who had failed elsewhere. Each individual case comes under the direct personal supervision and care of our Physicians. Write for our booklet of testimonials and full information.

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to convince

Dyspeptics

and those suffering from

Stomach Troubles

of the efficiency of

Glycozone

I will send a **\$1.00 Bottle Free** (only one to a family) to any one sending coupon and enclosing 25 cents to pay forwarding charges.

GLYCOZONE

cleanses the membrane of the stomach and subdues inflammation, thus removing the cause of your trouble.

It cannot fail to help you, and it is an absolutely harmless remedy.

Endorsed and successfully used by leading physicians for over 15 years.

Beware of concoctions of Oil of Vitriol, Sulphurous acid and water bearing similar names.

Sold by leading druggists. None genuine without my signature.

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FREE!

Valuable booklet on how to treat Diets.

Send free trial bottle of Glycozone, for which I enclose 25c. to pay forwarding charges. Coupon good only until May 5, '08

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 E brings perfect health to the scalp and hair. It removes all dandruff and the cause of it, and makes the hair lustrous and beautiful—gives it new life and health. Its delicate perfume renders it agreeable and pleasing. It is a delightful necessity to people of good breeding and refinement. It has been the world's standard for over 100 years.

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DR. MARSHALL'S CATARRH SNUFF

(Relieves at Once and Cures Absolutely)



It should be used by all sufferers of Catarrh, Cold in the head, La Grippe, Hay Fever, Ringing in the Ears or Itchiness (due to Catarrh). It gives instant relief, cleans the head at once by reaching the inflamed parts. Contains no cocaine, morphine, or other dangerous drugs.

25 cents per bottle at all druggists, or by mail prepaid.

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Pure as the Lily

Healthful and refreshing; that is why MEN-
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 CUM has the scent of fresh cut violets.

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keeps the skin soft and smooth; nothing better for chaps, pimples, burns, bruises and all eruptions. The collapsible metal tube is convenient and unbreakable. If your dealer hasn't it, send to us.

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**ALL VASELINE PREPARATIONS
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FREE

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CAPSICUM VASELINE

Better than the old-fashioned mustard plaster. Will not blister the most tender skin; easy to apply.

CARBOLATED VASELINE

The best of all antiseptic dressings. Pure vaseline with 3 per cent carbolic acid.

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Bunion Comfort

TO CONVINCE DOUBTERS THAT the
Fischer Bunion Protector
gives instant and permanent relief from bunion
torture, we will send a protector

Free

On Ten Days' Trial

To Every Sufferer.

Just send size of shoe, whether right or left,
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Wear the protector ten days--it
satisfactory send us fifty cents.
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The **Fischer Bunion
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to wear an **unstretched shoe**
without inconvenience.

The protector is a neat little
soft-leather appliance that
goes over the stocking, inside
the same size shoe that one
would wear without a bunion,
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Sempre Giovine

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is the name and re-
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ful skin food. A
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and emollient. A
scientific com-
pound of solid
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which har-
monize with
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Softens the skin and gives that
soft, peachy tint. Cures all
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Guaranteed not to cause a
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made of vegetable oils.

Used for over a quarter of
a century by the most fam-
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BY THE BROOKS SYSTEM

Any one using the Brooks System, no matter how inexperienced he is in the use of tools, can build his own row boat, sail boat, launch or canoe, at the cost of a little lumber and a few nails. All the boats built last year, by all the boat factories in the United States, combined in one fleet do not equal the number of boats built during the same time by novices using the Brooks System.

The Brooks System consists of exact size printed paper patterns of every piece of the boat; detailed instructions to build and a complete set of half-tone illustrations covering every step of the work; an itemized bill of all material required; and how to secure it. We tell you how to lay the pattern of each part on the proper piece of material, how to cut it out, how to fasten each part in its right place.

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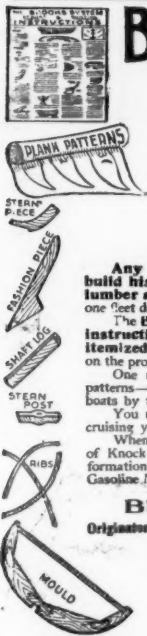
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Originators of the Pattern System of Boat Building

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Made of pressed steel, with air chambers in each end like a life boat. Can't leak—crack—dry out or sink—last a lifetime. Every boat guaranteed. The ideal boat for families—summer resorts—park—boat liveries, etc. Strong—sub—specify. Write to-day for our large catalog of row boats, motor boats, hunting and fishing boats. The W. H. Mullins Co., 325 Franklin St., Salem, 9.

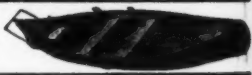
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14 foot row boat, as
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Are lighter and more durable than wood. Puncture-proof, non-sinkable; cannot tip over. A revelation in boat construction. Can be carried anywhere by hand, on bicycle or in buggy, or checked as baggage. When not in use, FOLD UP INTO A PACKAGE. Handsome catalog 6c in stamps.
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Everything in this Room thoroughly Cleaned by the Vacuum Cleaner

The dust is drawn from carpets, rugs, chairs, statuary, moulding, picture frames, cornices, and upholstery of all kinds, through small lines of hose, easily handled, to receptacles in the basement, where it is retained until destroyed.

Dust not scattered about as by the old method of cleaning by broom or carpet sweeper, but is actually removed. The small dust particles that ordinarily remain on furniture after sweeping are not present.

Anyone can handle the hose and the result, in absolute cleanliness, is the delight of the houseowner. Carpets and rugs cleaned without removal, which renders the annual housecleaning unnecessary.

The engine may be installed in the basement and run by electric or other power. It takes up but little room and is easily managed.



The White House, the residence of Miss Helen Gould, the St. Regis Hotel, The Times Building, New York, the Duquesne Club, Pittsburgh, and the Jordon-Marsh Store, Boston, to mention different types of buildings, are all cleaned by the Vacuum Cleaner.

For full information, estimates for installing the plant in your home or building, etc., address

Vacuum Cleaner Co., Dept. W

David T. Kenney, Pres't.

427 5th Avenue, NEW YORK



No. 217. Cut-under Canopy Top Surrey. Price complete \$28.00. As good as sells for \$ 5.00 more.

33 Years Selling Direct.

Our vehicles and harness have been sold direct from our factory to user for a third of a century. We ship for examination and approval and guarantee safe delivery. You are out nothing if not satisfied as to style, quality and price.

We Are the Largest Manufacturers in the World selling to the consumer exclusively. We make 200 styles of Vehicles, 65 styles of Harness. Send for large free catalog.

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No. 227. Fine Covert with Bike Gear and 1 1/2 in. cushion tires. Price complete, \$12.50. As good as sells for \$40 more.

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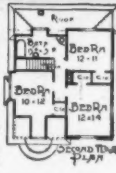
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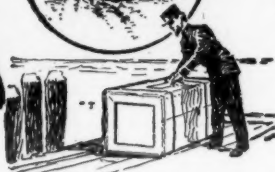
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Ainslee's for May

("The Magazine That Entertains")

amply sustains, and will go far toward enhancing, the enviable reputation this publication has already achieved for the brilliant quality of its fiction, and especially its short stories. We append a list of the more important features of its contents.

"THE GLOVE STAKES,"

By W. A. FRASER

We doubt if any writer now before the public can tell a better story than can the author of "Blood Lilies" and "Thoroughbreds," especially a racing story. "The Glove Stakes" is the first of a series of racing stories by Mr. Fraser, which we shall publish in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE.

"THE MATERNAL INSTINCT,"

By KATE JORDAN

The theme of this story is based upon a childish trait, just as was "A Committee of Three," by the same author, which appeared in the February number, and which elicited much favorable criticism. She will be remembered as the author of the successful book "Time the Comedian," which story, by the way, was published originally in AINSLEE'S.

Other noteworthy short stories are "The Casual Honeymoon," by James Branch Cabell; "The Price of Victory," by George Hibbard; "Lady Pam's Bridge Debts," by Mrs. C. N. Williamson; "That Girl of Kilpatrick's," by B. M. Bower; "The Visitor," by Margaret Houston; "Underneath," by Anna Yeaman Condit; "The Launching of the 'Helen Troy,'" by Frederick G. Fassett; "The Informality of a Fairy," by Pomona Penrin; "At the Golden Sun," by Mary B. Mullett; "The Salmon Pink Feather," by Sarah Guernsey Bradley, and "In Rome with the Romans," by Johnson Morton.

"THE LORD OF THE ISLE,"

By ELIZABETH DUER

is the novelette. *The Lord* is an old recluse who has quarreled with his daughter at the time of her marriage, and finally makes restitution to her daughter, after overcoming obstacles in the shape of chance and an unscrupulous nephew who wishes the lion's share of the great estate for himself. Mrs. Duer's stories are invariably interesting, and this is no exception to the rule.

In addition to the foregoing, there is an essay by Anne Rittenhouse, showing the influence of the motor-car on the growth of the household in America. There is also another of Mary Manners' widely-discussed "Society as a Merry-go-Round" essays, this time on the "The Veteran Butterflies." Channing Pollock tells what is good and what is bad in stagedom at the present time, and there are the usual department devoted to book reviews and a number of excellent poems.

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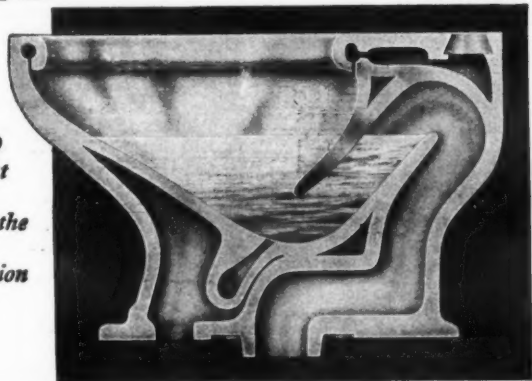
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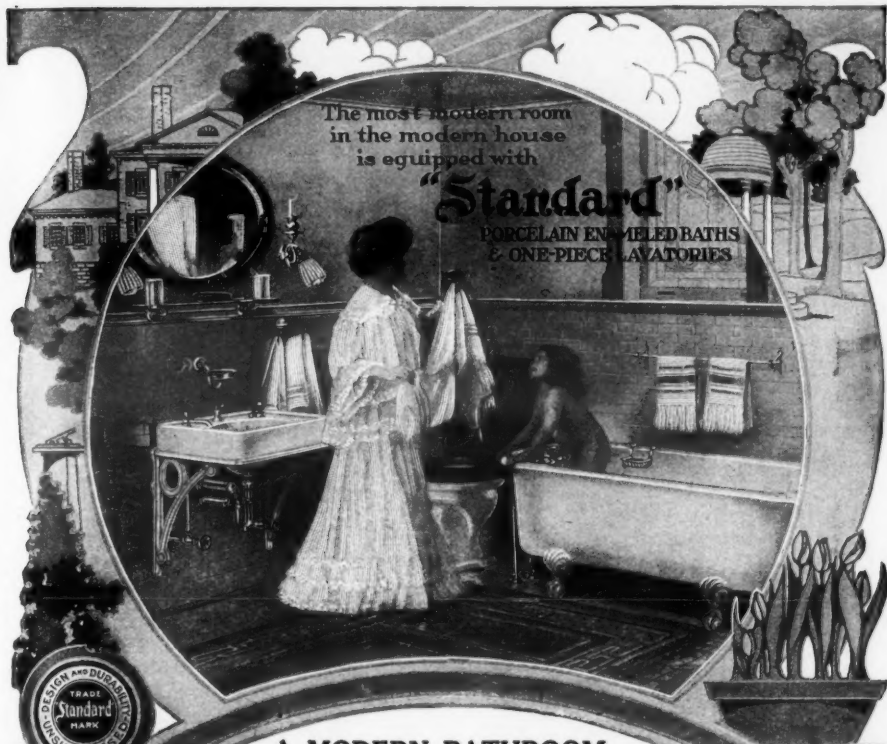


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